夜の海は怖い。
特に、雪が夜の海に溶けていく音は
マリンスノーを彷彿させて
心の底から冷えてくる。
そこが大変魅力的である。

勝木 光

Baby Steps

SHONEN MAGAZINE COMICS

Baby Steps

ベイビーステップ

15

勝木 光

KCM4428

KC

Baby Steps ベイビーステップ 15

勝木 光

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KC

Baby Steps
15
ベイビーステップ
勝木光

「全日本ジュニア」の前哨戦

神奈川ジュニア決勝戦2-1で

荒谷に破れ、惜しくも準優勝。

悔し涙を流したエーちゃんだが落ち込んでるヒマはない!

しゃあああああああああ

次なる戦い「関東ジュニア」は目前!!

関東ジュニア

1都7県を勝ち抜いた関東の強豪64名によるトーナメント。その中から16名が全日本ジュニアの出場権を得る。

「関東ジュニア」までに残されたわずかな時間は、強豪・難波江らを見据えた実践練習あるのみ!!

難波江●優

井出●恭明

岡田●隆行

Baby Steps ベイビーステップ

人物紹介

エーちゃん 丸尾栄一郎

STC所属。「次の全日本ジュニアで優勝、そしてプロへ」が命題。そこで優勝できなければプロを諦めるという条件付きで、テニス最優先の生活を送っている。同じ夢を持つナツは心の支え。そして依然、友達以上恋人未満。

ナツ 鷹崎奈津

STC所属。プロ志望で、先日の神奈川ジュニアでは2連覇達成。慢講派・エーちゃんとは真逆の超感覚派で、それが互いの刺激に。エーちゃんの一番身近にいる女の子。

青#コーチ

STCでのエーちゃんのコーチ。元プロ選手という経験に裏付けされた指導でエーちゃんをサポート。

清水亜希

コーチである母親と二人二脚でプロを目指す。ジュニア日本一の選手で、ナツは彼女に4戦全敗中。

佐々木姫子

エーちゃんの試合に必ず駆けつけてくれる心強い応援団。姫子はエーちゃんに片想い中。影山は親友。

影山小次郎

Baby Steps

CONTENTS

#132 PREPPING FOR SUMMER·····005
#133 REMATCH·····023
#134 EXPEDITION·····041
#135 NEVERENDING MOMENT·····059
#136 EXPECTATIONS ON FIRST MATCH ·····077
#137 CHANGE OF PACE·····097
#138 MAN WHO BRINGS A STORM·····115
#139 IDE YOSHIAKI·····133
#140 TRUE INTENTION·····151
#141 CONCENTRATE·····169

to Giant Strides

#132 PREPPING FOR SUMMER
DO YOU... LIKE TENNIS?
HUH...?
WELL... OF COURSE.
AH...
I'M SORRY... THAT WAS A STUPID QUESTION...
W-WHAT?
YOU SEEMED TO BE HAVING SO MUCH FUN WHEN I SAW YOU, SO...
EH...? AH... WAS I?
BUT, DON'T YOU LIKE IT, TOO?
I FEEL IT'D BE REALLY FUN IF YOU'RE THAT STRONG...

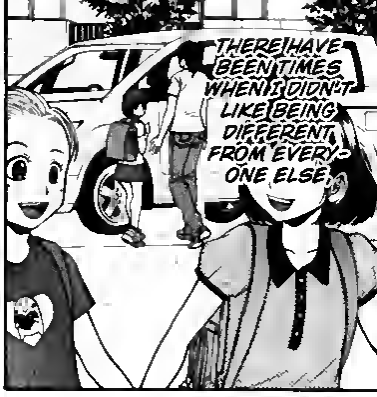
PLAYING ON THE COURT WAS MY LIFE...
NO... IT'S NOT LIKE I HATE IT.
IT'S JUST... MY MOM HAS BEEN MY COACH FOR AS LONG AS I CAN REMEMBER...
HUH?
YOU SEE... I'M NOT REALLY SURE.
SO ALL I'VE DONE WAS TENNIS...
IT'S ALMOST TIME!
AKI! YOU WERE HERE?
MOM.

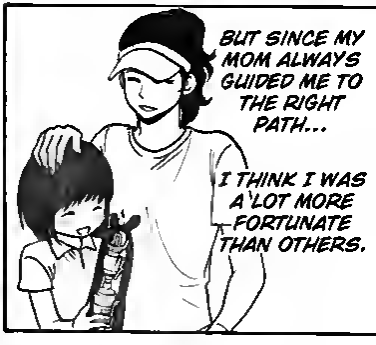
THEN OF COURSE SHE'D BE SO STRONG.
DOES THAT MEAN... SHE'S BEEN PLAYING TENNIS 24/7 EVER SINCE SHE WAS LITTLE?
IF THAT'S HER DAILY LIFE...
AH... BYE, THEN...
IT FEELS LIKE... SHE'S VERY SIMILAR TO HOW I WAS BEFORE STARTING TENNIS.
IT'S AN ENVIOUS ENVIRONMENT FOR ME, BUT...
OKAY THEN~ START YOUR MATCHES IN YOUR RESPECTIVE COURTS!!

HA!
HA!

WAS I... TOO STRANGE JUST NOW?
40 - 15.
Penguin

CONSIDER THIS AS THE 1ST-2ND ROUND OF THE KANSAI JUNIOR.
THINK OF HOW YOU COULD SAFELY WIN BY FORCING YOUR OPPONENT'S ERRORS WITHOUT TAKING TOO MUCH RISK.
Nod


THERE HAVE BEEN TIMES WHEN I DIDN'T LIKE BEING DIFFERENT FROM EVERY-ONE ELSE.


BUT SINCE MY MOM ALWAYS GUIDED ME TO THE RIGHT PATH...
I THINK I WAS A LOT MORE FORTUNATE THAN OTHERS.

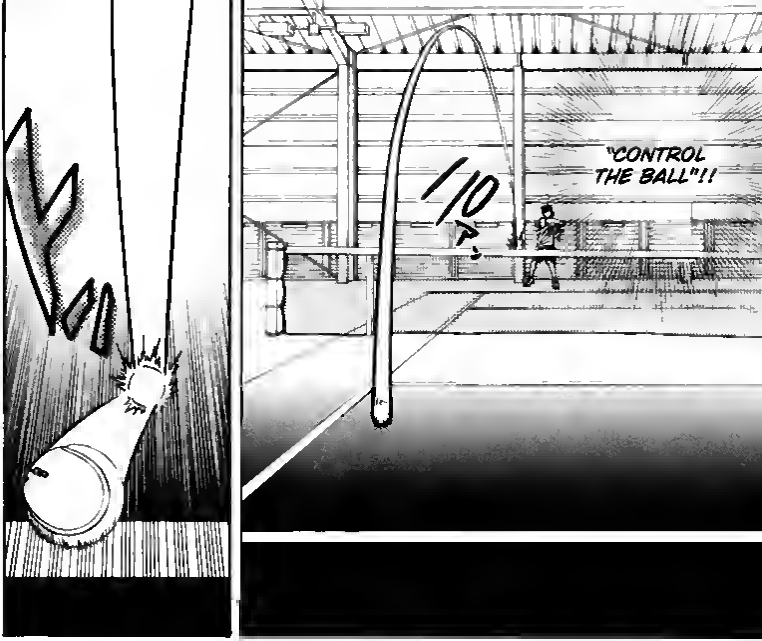
Glance

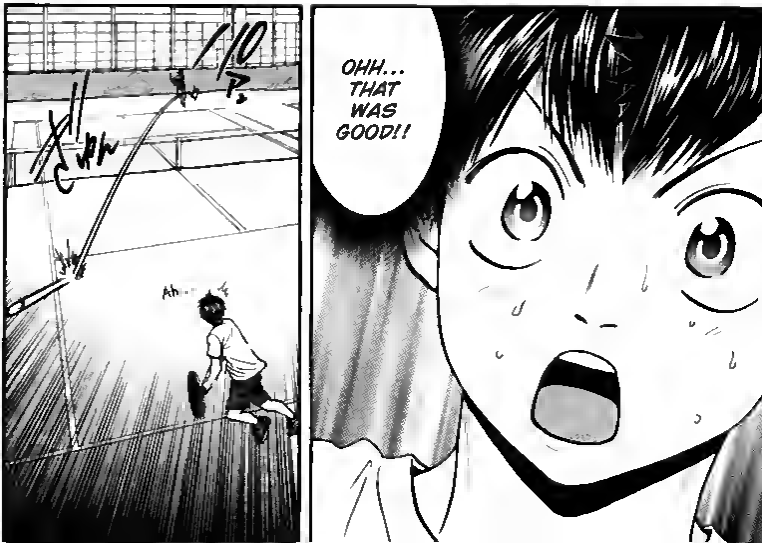
BUT, WHAT... IS THIS?

HA!
THERE'S DEFINITELY SOMETHING DIFFERENT...
MEN TALLY FINISH

OR...
AM I REALLY OKAY WITH THIS "HAPPINESS"?
DAMN IT... I LOST
YES!!

EH?! SURE...
IWASA-KUN, SINCE WE'VE STILL GOT SOME TIME LEFT, LET'S PLAY A BIT MORE.
IN MY TERMS, IT'S "SET IT UP A BIT EARLY, AND..."
FOR RETURNING A FAST BALL WITH A SLOW BALL.
IWASA-KUN SAID IT'S LIKE "CATCHING AND THROWING"
"SWING SLOWLY AS YOU..."


"CONTROL THE BALL"!!

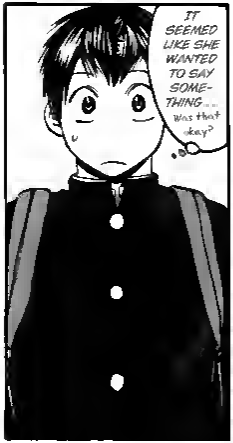

OHH... THAT WAS GOOD!!

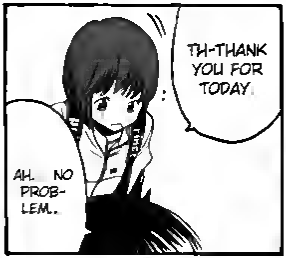
EH... THAT MANY?
SORRY! CAN WE PLAY JUST FOUR MORE GAMES? PLEASE!
HEY... ARE WE DONE?
AFTER HITTING A HIGH-ARCHING BALL, GET BACK QUICKLY AND WATCH OUT FOR A RISING CROSS SHOT... I COULD DEFINITELY USE THIS.
カキ
カキカキ
ゴゴゴ
HA!
OKAY, THAT'S IT FOR TODAY'S PRACTICE!

IT'D BE GREAT IF WE CAN PRACTICE AT YOUR PLACE, TOO.
YEAH, THAT'D BE GREAT! I'LL ASK MY COACH ALSO
ANIKI, SEE YOU TOMORROW!

UMM. MARUO-KUN.

NO, NO. I HOPE YOU HAD A GOOD TIME...
THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR TODAY.


IT SEEMED LIKE SHE WANTED TO SAY SOMETHING... Was that okay?


TH-THANK YOU FOR TODAY.
AH. NO PROBLEM.

GA GA

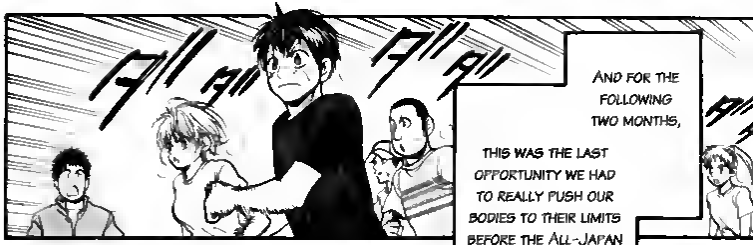
AH...
AKI! LET'S GO!

WHAT? NACCHAN
YOU BEAT SHIMIZU-SAN TODAY?
AND AKI-CHAN SEEMED LIKE SHE WASN'T IN HER BEST CONDITION...
GUESS SHE'S IN A PREPPING STAGE RIGHT NOW?
THAT'S INCREDIBLE! AREN'T YOU HAPPY?
I'M HAPPY, BUT IT WASN'T AN OFFICIAL MATCH, SO...
HUH?
HEY NAC-CHAN.. YOU LIKE TENNIS, RIGHT?
AH... THAT'S RIGHT.

I KNEW YOU'D SAY THAT.
OF COURSE! I LOVE IT.
HOW ABOUT MIYAGAWA-KUN AND ARAYA-KUN?
YOU SURE LOVE ASKING SUCH EMBARRASSING QUESTIONS.
EH... REALLY? DO I?
I DON'T THINK IT'S SO SIMPLE AS TO JUST SAY "I LIKE IT."
REALLY?

TO ME, IT'S NOT A MATTER OF LIKE OR DISLIKE ANYMORE.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
HONESTLY, I DON'T THINK I CAN EXPRESS IT IN JUST ONE WORD.
CAUSE IF YOU'VE BEEN PLAYING EVER SINCE YOU WERE A KID, THERE ARE TIMES WHEN IT'S TOUGH,
AND I'VE HAD TIMES WHEN I WANTED TO QUIT.
I SEE.
EVEN THOUGH HE WAS SAYING "I'LL GIVE UP ON GOING PRO" JUST LAST YEAR.
HEARING THAT FROM YOUR TENNIS-ORIENTED BODY SOUNDS SO CONVINCING.
IT'S LIKE MY FLESH AND BLOOD.
IT FEELS LIKE IT'S BECOME A BIG PART OF WHO I AM.
I SEE...
I THINK IT'S OKAY TO SAY WE LIKE IT.
BUT WELL, FOR US WHO'VE BEEN CONTINUING ON THIS FAR OUT,

あはーはは
NAH... ACTUALLY I'M NOT GETTING TIRED OF IT AT ALL.
Is that weird?
WHAT? DID YOU FINALLY START TO HATE TENNIS, MARUO-KUN?


AND FOR THE FOLLOWING TWO MONTHS,
THIS WAS THE LAST OPPORTUNITY WE HAD TO REALLY PUSH OUR BODIES TO THEIR LIMITS BEFORE THE ALL-JAPAN JUNIOR

CAUTIOUSLY SO WE WON'T GET INJURED, BUT WITH OUR ABSOLUTE BEST SO WE WON'T REGRET ANYTHING.
WE WENT BACK TO THAT BODY TRANSFORMATION.
みん
みん

I THOROUGHLY MASTERED EVERY TASK I CLEARED.
BY TACKLING MY NEVERENDING TO-DO LIST ONE BY ONE,
LEFT-HANDER COUNTERMEASURES, CHANGE-OF-PACE, AND PINPOINT CONTROL...

I WAS ABLE TO FEEL MY HEART AND BODY LEVELING UP AS I MOVED CLOSER AND CLOSER TO THE FATED MATCHES.
AND BY FIGHTING WITH OTHERS, I CRAFTED THOSE SKILLS INTO WEAPONS.

AND FINALLY, JULY'S HERE.

AH, ANIKI!
WHAT'S WRONG, EVERY-ONE?
HELLO THERE.
THE PAIRING BOX FOR THE KANTO JUNIOR FINALLY ARRIVED!
IT'S FINALLY... HERE!!

imangascans.org
iMANGA SCANLATION
imangascans
rc.rchighway.net

Baby Steps

ベイビーステップ

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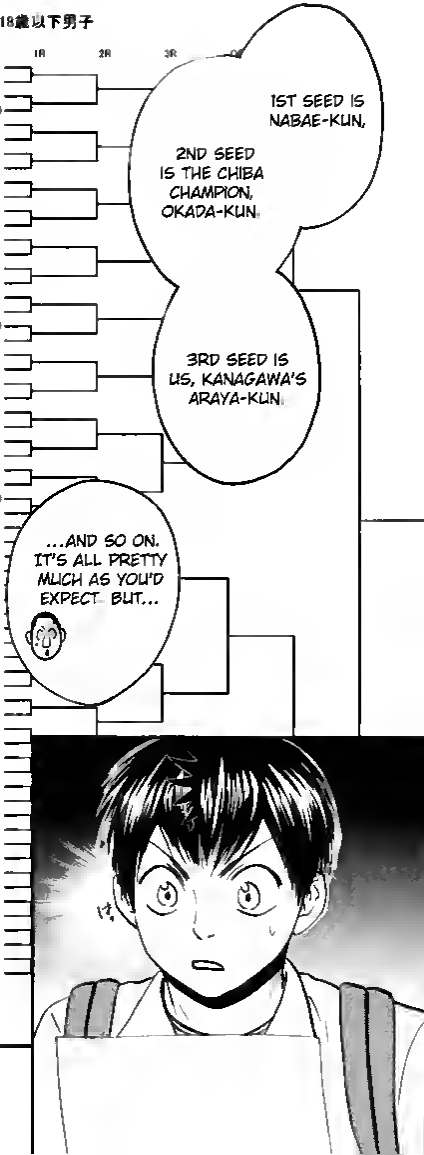
#133 REMATCH
ANIKI! BRACKETS FOR THE KANTO JUNIOR WERE DECIDED.
KANTO JUNIOR TENNIS TOURNAMENT:
WHAT!!
A TOURNAMENT BETWEEN THE TOP 64 PLAYERS OF THE 7 PREFECTURES AND ONE METROPOLIS IN THE KANTO AREA.
ONLY THE TOP 16 FROM THIS TOURNAMENT QUALIFY FOR THE ALL-JAPAN JUNIOR.
IN OTHER WORDS, MY MINIMUM GOAL IS TO WIN TWICE AND GET IN THE TOP 16, BUT...

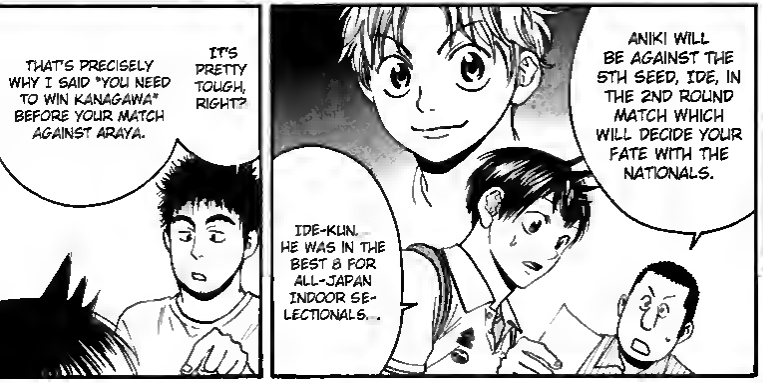
関東ジュニアテニス大会　18歳以下男子

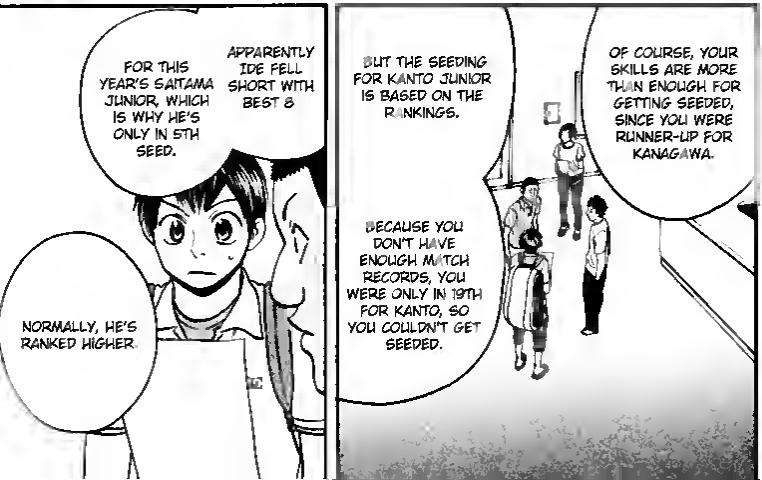
①	1	鍋嶋江 嶋	（青城アカデミー）	
	2	山下 貞	（BODTA）	
	3	志本 智嶋	（智利工大嶋豪）	
	4	豪豪川 正一	（上田テニス研究センター）	
	5	赤松 豪豪	（島豪ジュニアTC）	
	6	嶋川 嶋嶋	（豪豪沢豪）	
	7	四々高 全	（E tennis）	
16	8	高 嶋手	（鈴江シングルTC）	
15	9	嶋清 嶋人	（ビリーバブルTA）	
	15	藤木 勝太	（MIAMI TENNIS CLUB）	
	11	豪条 浩二	（アヤノTS）	
	12	北嶋 孝仁	（NTTC）	
	13	中田 宝	（浦田高）	
	14	豪井 嶋	（ワールドプロTA）	
	15	藤手嶋 豪	（アイルJTC）	
⑦	16	太田 智浩	（かがわTC）	
④	17	豪木 豪豪	（智嶋アカデミー）	
	18	高上 嶋	（高明栄光高）	
	19	小石川 嶋豪	（上田テニス研究センター）	
	20	藤 宝高	（豪浦学館）	
	21	豪沢 論智	（STC）	
	22	川豪 大嶋	（エスタTC）	
	23	中野 高士	（智利工大嶋高）	
⑲	24	豪藤 学	（立川智豪）	
⑥	25	小野 カズマ	（ミストTA）	
	26	豪辺 嶋	（ミナト嶋豪TC）	
	27	豪月 豪方	（智利工大嶋豪）	
	28	安嶋 高大	（BEST）	
	29	矢河辺 豪嶋	（豪田豪高豪）	
	30	丸豪 学一豪	（STC）	
	31	松田 豪弘	（上田テニス研究センター）	
⑤	32	井豪 嶋明	（芦豪嶋豪）	
③	33	寺島 高人	（高田高高豪）	
	34	豪智 豪弘	（豪明栄光豪）	
	35	大河内 公豪	（嶋豪豪）	
	36	豪井 ジャスティン	（エスタTC）	
	37	豪 嶋介	（豪田豪智豪）	
	38	田中 大洋	（DCS）	
	39	嶋能嶋 豪	（しろばラケットクラブ）	
⑫	40	米田 豪治	（嶋豪豪）	
⑱	41	嶋川 浩一豪	（KHTC）	
	42	高中 嶋方	（GTOTC）	
	43	牧野 嶋	（少年の豪JRT）	
	44	長元 嶋高	（豪坂TC）	
	45	小山田 孝介	（和豪学園）	
	46	山本 豪	（豪明栄光豪）	
	47	高嶋 智弘	（エスタTC）	
⑬	48	豪谷 豪	（GITC）	
⑰	49	豪上 紀豪	（湘南工豪学院）	
	50	豪嶋 豪琴	（多摩ビーチTC）	
	51	嶋方 利嶋	（テニスビジョンJTA）	
	52	芝田 克高	（YSTC）	
	53	豪嶋 智二	（J A A S）	
	54	高 田豪	（コートピア大井TA）	
	55	小田豪 永治	（豪田豪豪豪）	
⑨	56	井上 豪一	（ミナミカワTC）	
⑪	57	小野寺 一	（ハイビジョンTA）	
	58	豪豪 智嶋	（ファーストESTA）	
	59	天利 嶋	（エリカエースTA）	
	60	久松 和仁	（士豪TC）	
	61	藤上 豪豪	（嶋嶋豪豪豪）	
	62	豪川 豪士	（GITC）	
	63	嶋 浩豪	（YAMAMOTO T A）	
②	64	嶋田 嶋行	（かがわTC）	

1R　2R　3R　QF



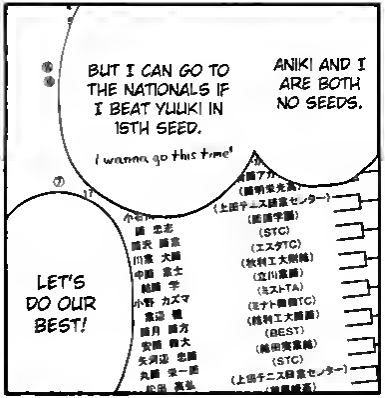
	26	渡辺 健	(ミナト飛鳥TC)
	27	望月 俊方	(秋利工大附高)
	28	安部 雄大	(BEST)
	29	矢河辺 忠則	(福田実業高)
	30	Maruo Eiichiro	(STC)
	31	松田 高弘	(上田テニス研究センター)
⑤	32	Ide Yoshiaki	(Aosaki High)
⑧	33	寺島 隼人	(羽田倶楽部)
	34	鳥谷 憲弘	(修明栄光高)
	35	大河内 公章	(浦霞高)
	36	桑井 ジャスティン	(エスタTC)





YUP.

BUT SINCE ANIKI'S AIMING TO TAKE THE TOP IN THE NATIONALS,
HONESTLY, I CAN'T SAY IT'S A GOOD DRAW,
YOU CAN'T BE COMPLAINING ABOUT THIS... RIGHT?

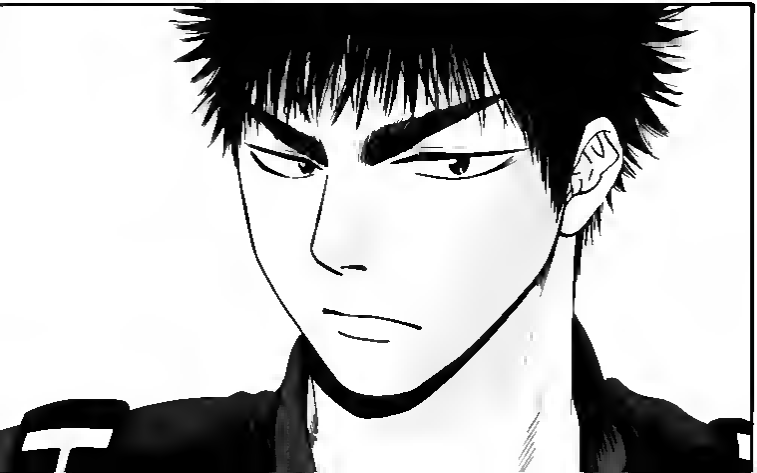

BUT I CAN GO TO THE NATIONALS IF I BEAT YUUKI IN 15TH SEED.
I wanna go this time!
ANIKI AND I ARE BOTH NO SEEDS.
LET'S DO OUR BEST!

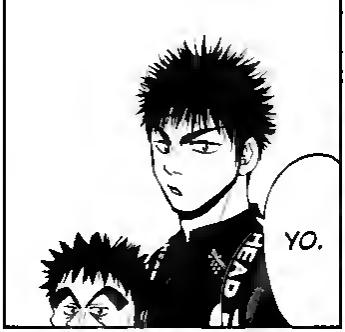
HEY GUYS- SO THE DRAW'S OUT? SHOW ME! SHOW ME!
NATSU'S IN 1ST SEED

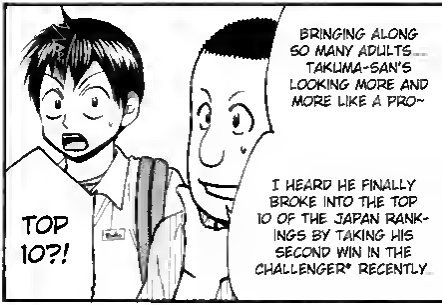
ガヤ
ガヤ

キィ...

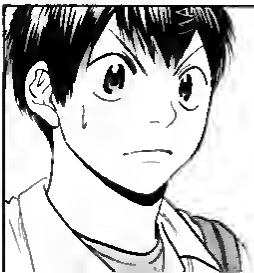
HEAD
HEAD



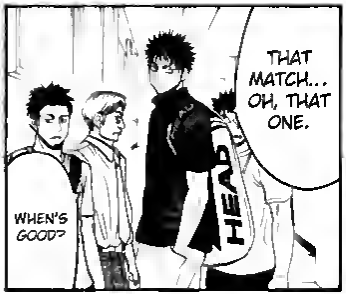


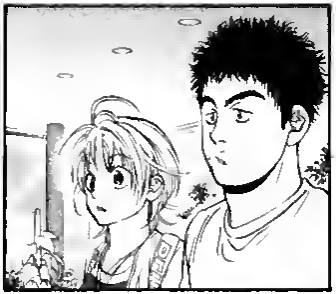

BRINGING ALONG SO MANY ADULTS... TAKUMA-SAN'S LOOKING MORE AND MORE LIKE A PRO~
I HEARD HE FINALLY BROKE INTO THE TOP 10 OF THE JAPAN RANKINGS BY TAKING HIS SECOND WIN IN THE CHALLENGER* RECENTLY.
TOP 10?!

*Professional tour tournament that grants points for the world rankings.



I'M SURE YOU'RE REALLY BUSY AND STUFF, BUT...
STOP A SECOND!!
AND IT'S A SUSPENSION NOT AN END
I DON'T FEEL THAT GREAT EITHER.
CAN I ASK YOU TO MAKE SOME TIME FOR THE CONTINUATION OF THAT MATCH...
SOMETIME SOON?


THAT MATCH... OH, THAT ONE.
WHEN'S GOOD?



I'LL BE OVER-SEAS STARTING NEXT WEEK, SO IT'LL HAVE TO BE THIS WEEK...
AND IF IT'S THIS WEEK ..

KANTO JUNIOR STARTS THREE WEEKS FROM NOW, SO...
AS LONG AS TAKUMA-SAN'S FREE, ANYTIME TILL THEN IS FINE.

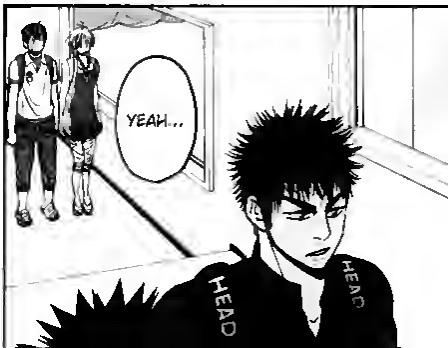
I'M READY ANYTIME... ACTUALLY THE EARLIER THE BETTER!
T-TODAY?
AH... YES!
SURE...
You seem confident.
HEAD

THEN TODAY.
!

YOU GET TO PLAY WITH A PRO AGAIN!

YEAH.
THE ONE WHERE YOU GOT MAD AT COACH AOI FOR INTERRUPTING?

ALRIGHT...


YEAH...
HEAD
HEAD

I FEEL I'VE BEEN ABLE TO COME TO A DECISION AFTER SEEING TAKUMA-SAN.

ALTHOUGH I WAS THINKING I WON'T BE ABLE TO GIVE UP ON PRO REGARDLESS OF THE OUTCOME OF FUTURE MATCHES...

THAT'D MEAN I WASN'T ABLE TO LIVE UP TO PEOPLE'S EXPECTATIONS LIKE TAKUMA-SAN IS.

IF I WERE TO LOSE KANTO AND DON'T MAKE IT TO ALL-JAPAN, THERE WON'T BE ANY COMPANIES THAT'D WANT TO SIGN ME ON.

HEAD

関東ジュニアテニス大会 18歳

(青森アカデミー)
(BOOTA)
(筑利工大硬庭)
(上宝テニス放究センター)
(島袋ジュニアTC)
(硬見沢高)
(E tennis)
(ジュニアTC)
(BOOTA)
(エルTC)
(上宝)
(和浦守備)
(STC)
(エスタTC)
(筑波工大硬庭)
(企川東庭)
(ミスト-TA)
(ミナト硬庭TC)
(筑波工大東庭)
(BEST)
(硬庭東高高)
(STC)
(上宝テニス放究センター)
(芦硬崎庭)
(柳原東庭)

THAT'S WHY... IF I DON'T MAKE IT TO ALL-JAPAN IN THIS KANTO COMPETITION, I'LL GIVE UP ON GOING PRO.

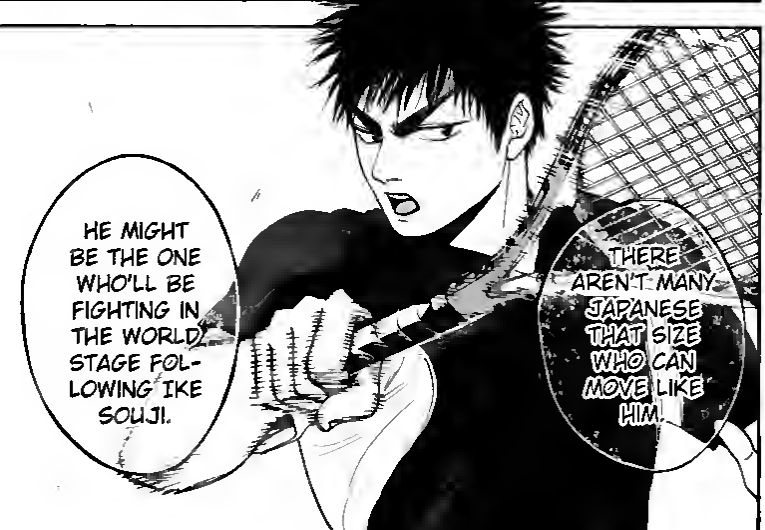
I SHOULDN'T BE FIXATED ON BECOMING A PRO IF THAT HAPPENS.

IF I CONTINUE PURSUING BEING A PRO EVEN AFTER THAT, I'D BE CAUSING LOTS OF TROUBLE AND CONCERNS FOR THE PEOPLE AROUND ME.

HA!

BGH~

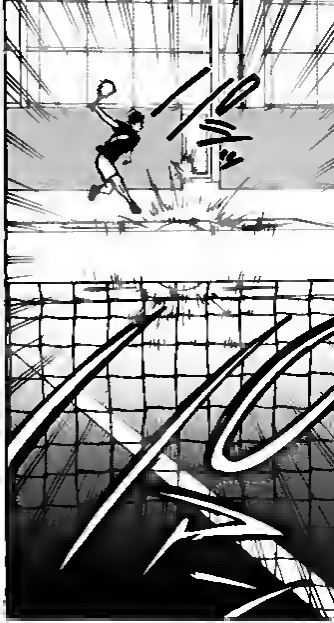
WOW~ EGAWA-KUN'S SERVE IS SO MESMERIZING, NO MATTER HOW MANY TIMES I WATCH
HE MIGHT BE NO. 1 IN JAPAN ALREADY IN TERMS OF SPEED ALONE.

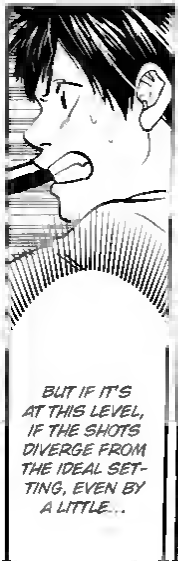

THERE AREN'T MANY JAPANESE THAT SIZE WHO CAN MOVE LIKE HIM.
HE MIGHT BE THE ONE WHO'LL BE FIGHTING IN THE WORLD STAGE FOLLOWING IKE SOUJI.

THEY GET FASTER AFTER BOUNCING, JUST LIKE IKE-KUN!!
THE QUALITY OF HIS SHOTS IS AT A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT LEVEL COMPARED TO A FEW MONTHS AGO...!!
DON'T GIVE HIM SPACE TO GET TO THE NET USING CHANGE-OF-PACE!!
I CAN'T LET TAKUMA-SAN MOVE UP SO EASILY!
RGH
BUT.. I CAN SOMEHOW RETURN THEM'!

BEFORE HE FIGURES OUT THE TIMING OF MY TOP SPINS...
...SLICE!
TAKE THAT CHANGE TO FIGHT HIM WITH A FLAT!!
CHANGE THE PACE FROM A TOP-SPIN THAT JUMPS UP TO A SLICE WITH LONG AIR TIME THAT DOESN'T BOUNCE MUCH...
IF HIS SPEED DROPS FROM TRYING TO ADJUST THE TIMING...

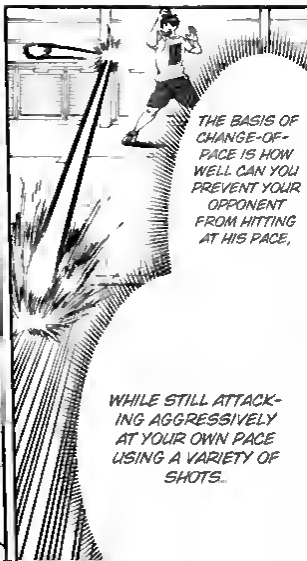
30 - 15.
Tch
YES!





WHILE CHOOSING THE SHOTS THAT ARE BEST SUITED FOR THE MOMENT, YOU HAVE TO MAKE SURE THEY ALL EVENTUALLY LEAD TO A SET OF FINISHING SHOTS...

BUT IF IT'S AT THIS LEVEL, IF THE SHOTS DIVERGE FROM THE IDEAL SETTING, EVEN BY A LITTLE...


THE BASIS OF CHANGE-OF-PACE IS HOW WELL CAN YOU PREVENT YOUR OPPONENT FROM HITTING AT HIS PACE,
WHILE STILL ATTACKING AGGRESSIVELY AT YOUR OWN PACE USING A VARIETY OF SHOTS.

THE GAME GETS TURNED OVER IN AN INSTANT!!
RGH~

GRR...
40 - 15.
Humph.

HE'S AN UNFAMILIAR FACE. IS HE FROM STC?
EGAWA-KUN'S OPPONENT IS PRETTY GOOD TOO.
HE'S OUR RISING STAR WHO'S ONLY BEEN PLAYING TENNIS FOR TWO YEARS.
RGH~
JUST TWO YEARS... WITH THAT?
NOT ONLY IS HE RETURNING EGAWA-KUN'S SHOTS, HE'S GOING FOR THE POINTS, TOO!
AND HIS SHOTS ARE SURPRISINGLY RICH IN VARIETY AND REALLY ACCURATE

AND HIS TIMINGS ARE INCREDIBLY GOOD.
YUP.. THAT'S QUITE SOME-THING
YES!
40 - 30.

HE'S MADE UNBELIEVABLE PROGRESS IN THE LAST THREE MONTHS.
HE MIGHT MAKE THE HEADLINES IN THE NEAR FUTURE
HA!
ANYWAY, THE KANTO JUNIOR WILL BE QUITE INTERESTING,
SO IT'D BE GREAT IF THE MEDIA AND BUSINESSES PAY CLOSE ATTENTION.
THAT'S IT FOR TODAY'S PRACTICE!
Egawa 6 7
Maruo 2 5

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Baby Steps

ベイビーステップ

RAWs: Share
Cleaner: Stark
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Typesetter: Kajii
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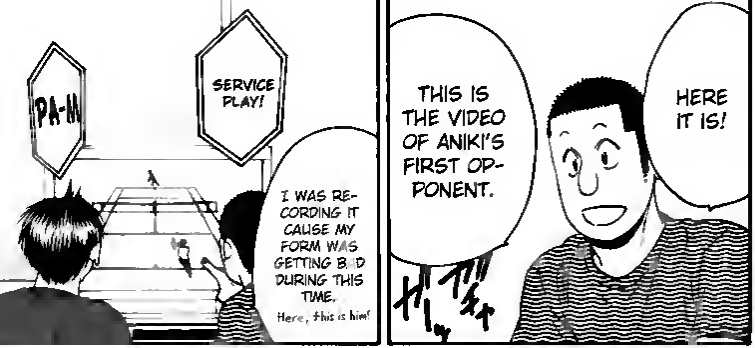
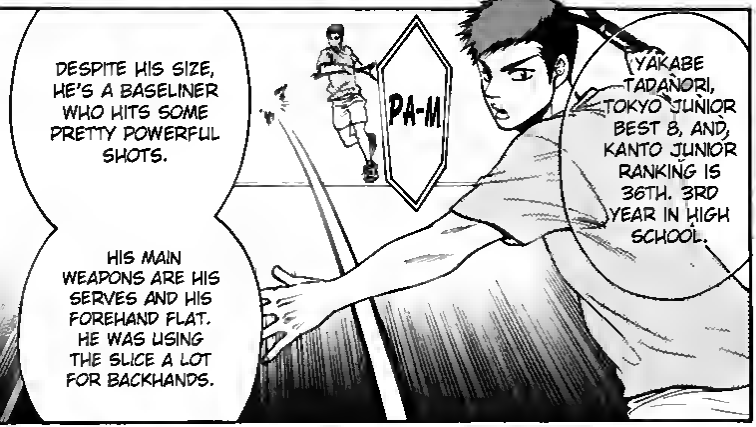
Q-Checker: Galaaza

HA!
#134 EXPEDITION
ONCE WE HIT THE ONE WEEK MARK TILL KANTO JUNIOR,
NEXT!

I NOTICED WHILE SKETCHING...
ALL YOUR FOREHAND SHOTS ARE HIT WITH THE EXACT SAME FORM.
REALLY?
WE WENT INTO A PRACTICE MATCH ORIENTED CONDITIONING PERIOD, SO TRAINING TIME GOT CUT DOWN A LOT.
BUT THANKS TO MIYAGAWA-KUN AND IWASAKI-KUN, IT'S BEEN A VERY VALUABLE TIME.
MARUO-KUN'S REALLY STARTING TO GO FOR THE NASTY PLACES
T-THANK YOU.
HA!

Campus
BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN I GET THE LUXURY OF SPARE TIME.


PA-N
SERVICE PLAY!
I WAS RECORDING IT CAUSE MY FORM WAS GETTING BAD DURING THIS TIME.
Here, this is him!
THIS IS THE VIDEO OF ANIKI'S FIRST OPPONENT.
HERE IT IS!


PA-N
DESPITE HIS SIZE, HE'S A BASELINER WHO HITS SOME PRETTY POWERFUL SHOTS.
HIS MAIN WEAPONS ARE HIS SERVES AND HIS FOREHAND FLAT. HE WAS USING THE SLICE A LOT FOR BACKHANDS.
YAKABE TADANORI, TOKYO JUNIOR BEST 8, AND, KANTO JUNIOR RANKING IS 36TH. 3RD YEAR IN HIGH SCHOOL.

PA-N
HIS FOREHAND AND SERVES ARE CERTAINLY NICE...
IT'S FAIRLY CLOSE TO ALEX'S STYLE...

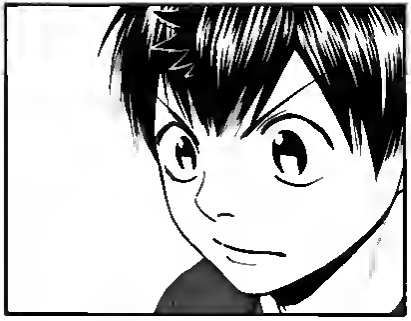
JUST SO YOU KNOW, I GOT TOTALLY OWNED, SO PLEASE DON'T LOOK AT ME TOO MUCH.
15 - LOVE.
カキカキカキ
カキカキ
カキカキカキ
カキ
PAN

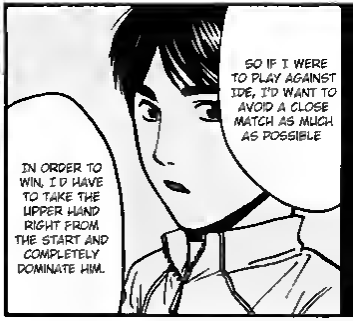
THERE'S NO HARM IN HAVING MORE DATA ON MY OPPONENT.
YEAH. BUT I'LL WATCH AS MANY AS I CAN JUST IN CASE.
FOOTAGE OF YOUR POTENTIAL 2ND ROUND OPPONENT, IDE, SHOULD BE SOMEWHERE IN THE CLUB.
ANIKI ACTUALLY SAW HIM PLAY A COUPLE TIMES TOO, RIGHT?
I'VE PLAYED A SIMILAR STYLE BEFORE, AND I'M HIGHER UP IN RANK...
IF I KNOW HIS FAVORITE SHOT, I CAN GRASP THE PACE PRETTY EASILY, AND IT'D BE EASY TO INSTIGATE CHANGE.
PA-M
DEUCE.
PA-M
40 - 30.
EVEN THOUGH HE WAS BEST 8 IN THE ALL-JAPAN JUNIOR INDOOR SELECTIONALS.
HE STOPPED AT BEST 8 IN THE SAITAMA JUNIOR...
IDE YOSHIAKI ...

!
DOUBLE FAULT!
DOUBLE FAULT AT A 5 - 5 DEUCE FOR GOING ALL OUT ON THE SECOND SERVE?
HOW CAN HE GO FOR SUCH A HIGH-RISK CHOICE AT SUCH A CRITICAL MOMENT?
BUT IN THE END, THIS SUPER-AGGRESSIVE-NESS IS LEADING THE ATTACKS
SINCE RISKY PLAYS ARE FUN TO WATCH, THE AUDIENCE GETS PUMPED UP.
AND IDE-KUN HARMONIZES WITH THEM AND HE HIMSELF GETS PUMPED UP.
THE SYNERGIC EFFECT BRINGS UP HIS CONDITION MORE AND MORE.
THAT RESULTS IN HIM DOMINATING THE CRITICAL POINTS.

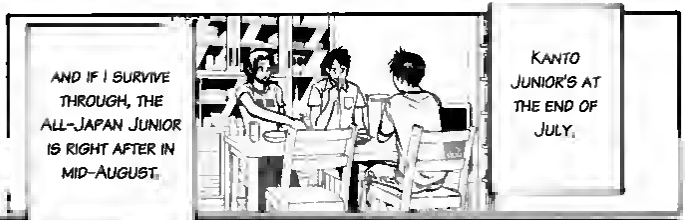
ALTHOUGH HIS TECHNIQUE ISN'T QUITE UP TO THAT LEVEL..
I THINK HE POSSESS A MENTALITY CLOSE TO A TOP-LEVEL PROFESSIONAL ATHLETE,

#FLASHBACK FROM CH67



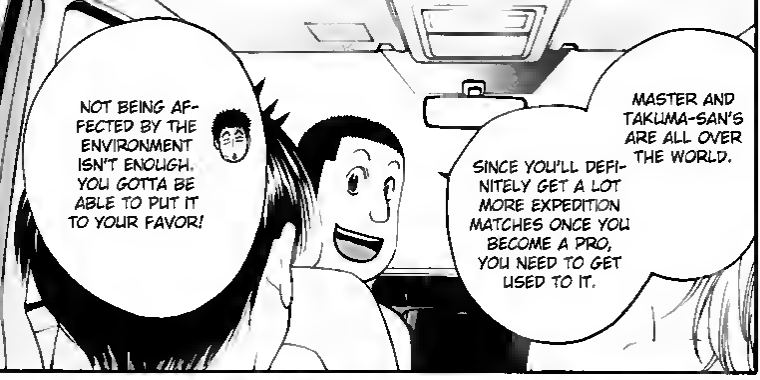

SO IF I WERE TO PLAY AGAINST IDE, I'D WANT TO AVOID A CLOSE MATCH AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE
IN ORDER TO WIN, I'D HAVE TO TAKE THE UPPER HAND RIGHT FROM THE START AND COMPLETELY DOMINATE HIM.

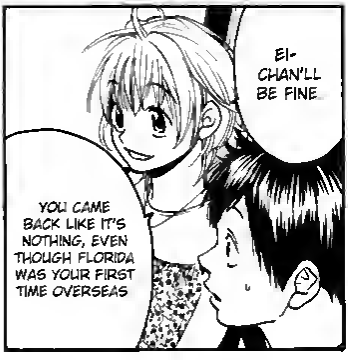
SCHOOL LET OUT FOR SUMMER VACATION.
WE'LL DEFINITELY GO CHEER FOR YOU!!
prince

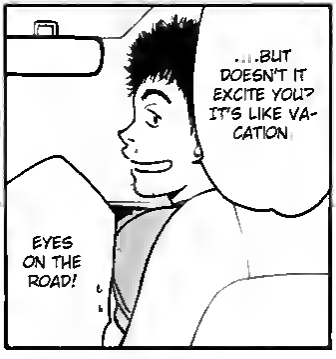

KANTO JUNIOR'S AT THE END OF JULY.
AND IF I SURVIVE THROUGH, THE ALL-JAPAN JUNIOR IS RIGHT AFTER IN MID-AUGUST.

WITH THIS SUMMER, MY FUTURE PATH WILL BE DECIDED.

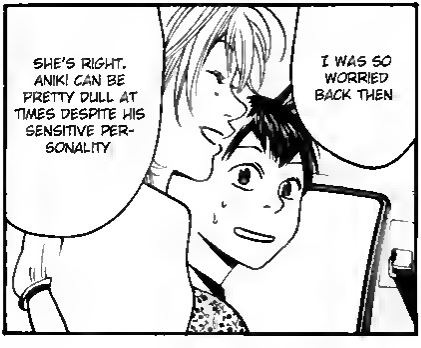
THEN, LET'S GO!
OK, Y EVERYONE, YOU PACKED ALL YOUR STUFF, RIGHT?
THE DAY BEFORE KANTO JUNIOR TENNIS COMPETITION
EVEN IF IT'S AN EXPEDITION MATCH, IT'S STILL CHIBA.
WHY'S THE GUY WHO WENT ALL THE WAY TO FLORIDA SO WORRIED?
WOW... IT'S MY FIRST TIME GOING FOR A MATCH OVERNIGHT.


NOT BEING AFFECTED BY THE ENVIRONMENT ISN'T ENOUGH. YOU GOTTA BE ABLE TO PUT IT TO YOUR FAVOR!
SINCE YOU'LL DEFINITELY GET A LOT MORE EXPEDITION MATCHES ONCE YOU BECOME A PRO, YOU NEED TO GET USED TO IT.
MASTER AND TAKUMA-SAN'S ARE ALL OVER THE WORLD.


EI-CHAN'LL BE FINE
YOU CAME BACK LIKE IT'S NOTHING, EVEN THOUGH FLORIDA WAS YOUR FIRST TIME OVERSEAS


...BUT DOESN'T IT EXCITE YOU? IT'S LIKE VACATION
EYES ON THE ROAD!

NO WAY!
YUP YUP. HE'S ACTUALLY PRETTY SLOW
ブオオ


SHE'S RIGHT. ANIKI CAN BE PRETTY DULL AT TIMES DESPITE HIS SENSITIVE PERSONALITY
I WAS SO WORRIED BACK THEN

KAANAI ALI

HELLO~ ANYONE THERE~?

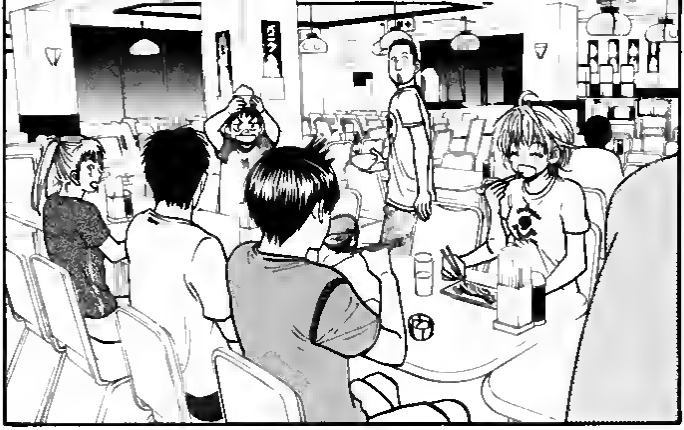
STC

ALRIGHT. TODAY, WE'LL HAVE A LIGHT 2-HOUR WORK-OUT SHORTLY AFTER.
MAKE SURE YOU TAKE IN PLENTY OF CARBOHY-DRATES WITH DINNER.
AND GET TO SLEEP AS EARLY AS YOU CAN.

TOMORROW, MAKE SURE YOU FINISH YOUR BREAKFAST AT LEAST THREE HOURS BEFORE YOUR MATCH STARTS.
AND MAKE SURE YOU WARM UP PROPERLY BEFORE THE MATCH.
ドキ
ドキ
ドキ
AND THE LOSER GETS ON THE FIRST TRAIN BACK HOME!
THAT'S ALL!
ドーン
HEY! DON'T JOKE AROUND, COACH. THAT'S NOT FUNNY!
THAT PART'S A BIT DIFFERENT FROM A VACATION
DON'T TAKE IT SO LIGHTLY! IT'S A FIGHT FOR SURVIVAL!
YUP!! THAT'S THE GOOD PART. IT'S JUST LIKE A GAME.
THEN GATHER IN THE LOBBY ONCE YOU'VE PUT YOUR STUFF IN YOUR ROOMS!

WOW!
WE GET TO STAY HERE SEVEN DAYS AT MOST.
THERE'S A COIN LAUNDRY OUTSIDE, TOO.
Wow~
So hot!
THERE'S A LOT OF PEOPLE ALREADY
THIS IS TOMORROW'S BATTLEFIELD.

AH... NABAE-KUN'S HERE.
YO!
WOAH...?! ARAYA-KUN!
ANIKI! LET'S WARM UP!
Oh ohhh
IT'S HOT, BUT DON'T GET WORN OUT IN PRACTICE!
Let's smack some balls later.
YEAH!

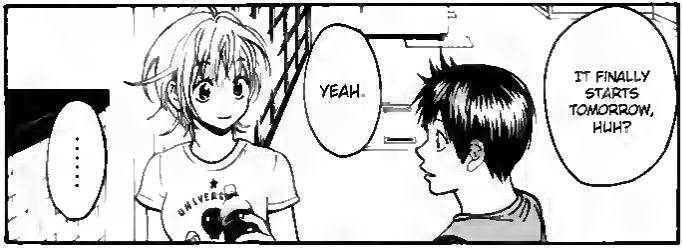


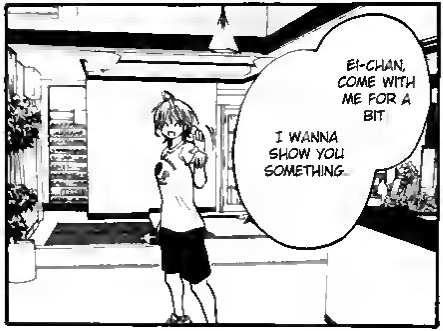
It's like a field trip...
EVEN THOUGH THE COMPETITION STARTS TOMORROW,
IS IT OKAY TO BE HAVING SO MUCH FUN?

!!
!!
YEAH... OKAY.
I'LL CALL YOU AGAIN TOMORROW.
...YUP.
I SAID OKAY! BYE!

AH, EI-CHAN WERE YOU CALLING HOME?
YUP. YOU?
I CAME TO GET SOME DRINKS

ノシッタリ


IT FINALLY STARTS TOMORROW, HUH?
YEAH.
……


EI-CHAN, COME WITH ME FOR A BIT
I WANNA SHOW YOU SOMETHING

AH... THAT'S RIGHT!

THIS ISN'T SCHOOL.
EH...? WHERE'RE WE GOING?
SHOULDN'T WE TELL THE COACH FIRST IF WE'RE GOING OUT?
IT'S FINE.
79
AH... THAT'S RIGHT.
79

OR DO YOU NOT WANNA SEE IT?
O-OF COURSE NOT! I'D LOVE TO SEE!
LET'S GO THEN!
IT'S PRETTY CLOSE, SO DON'T WORRY.

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Baby Steps

ベイビーステップ

RAWs: Share
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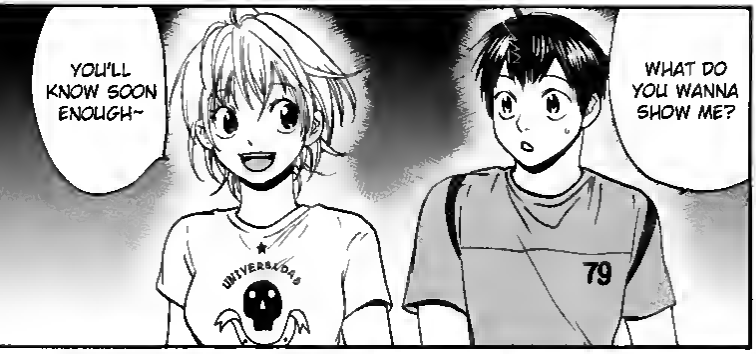
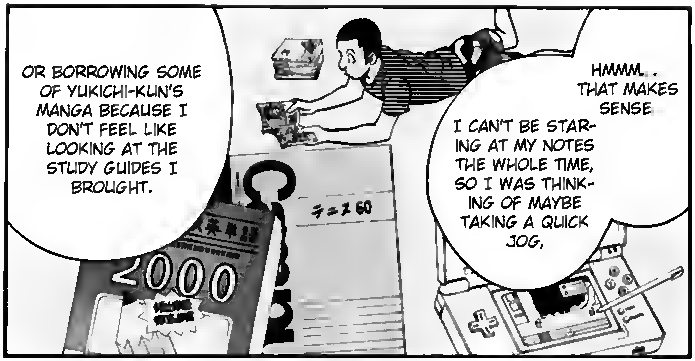
KAANAI ALI
#135 NEVERENDING MOMENT


YOU'LL KNOW SOON ENOUGH~
WHAT DO YOU WANNA SHOW ME?
UNIVERSIDAD
79

BUT... I'LL PROBABLY BE REVIEWING MY NOTES FOR TOMORROW.

EH? LET'S SEE...
I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING IN PARTICULAR PLANNED.
BY THE WAY, WERE YOU PLANNING TO DO SOMETHING, EI-CHAN?

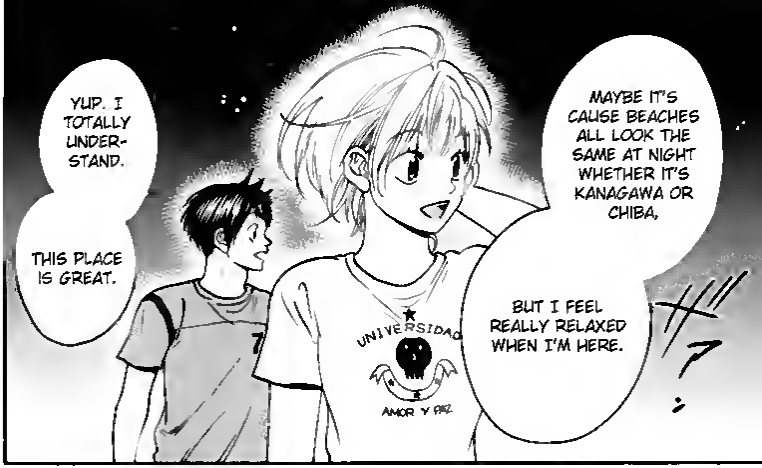
AND IT DOESN'T FEEL RIGHT TO BE DOING NOTHING WHEN I HAVE A MATCH TOMORROW.
OF COURSE, BUT I CERTAINLY CAN'T FALL ASLEEP AT EIGHT,
BUT YOU DON'T FEEL UNPREPARED, RIGHT?
RIGHT? I TOTALLY UNDERSTAND.
I TALKED ABOUT THIS WITH COACH AOI BEFORE.
AND HE SAID BEING ABLE TO "EFFECTIVELY USE YOUR SPARE TIME"
IS REALLY IMPORTANT, ESPECIALLY ONCE YOU BECOME A PRO AND HAVE LOT OF EXPEDITIONS.
IT'S NOT GOOD TO BE THINKING TOO MUCH RIGHT BEFORE THE MATCH, RIGHT?
BUT YOU CAN'T BE STARING AT NOTHING, EITHER.
THAT'S WHY IT'S GOOD TO HAVE YOUR OWN WAY OF SPENDING TIME THAT'S RELAXING, BUT KEEPS YOU FOCUSED AT THE SAME TIME.

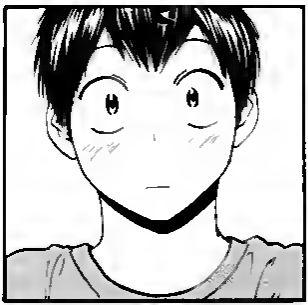

HMMM. . . THAT MAKES SENSE.
I CAN'T BE STARING AT MY NOTES THE WHOLE TIME, SO I WAS THINKING OF MAYBE TAKING A QUICK JOG,
OR BORROWING SOME OF YUKICHI-KUN'S MANGA BECAUSE I DON'T FEEL LIKE LOOKING AT THE STUDY GUIDES I BROUGHT.

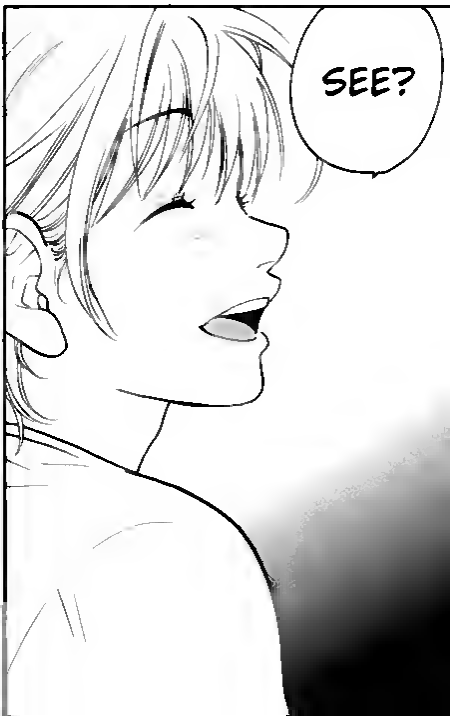
RIGHT? THAT'S WHY I WANTED TO SHOW EI-CHAN
THAT THERE ARE THINGS LIKE THIS, TOO.

AH!!
IT'S THE
BEACH!

THIS PLACE IS GREAT! THERE WAS A BEACH SO CLOSE BY!
AH, THERE'S A BUNCH OF PEOPLE, BUT THEY ALL SEEM LIKE TENNIS PLAYERS!
UNIVERSIDAD

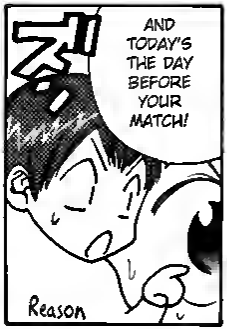

YUP. I TOTALLY UNDER-STAND.
THIS PLACE IS GREAT.
MAYBE IT'S CAUSE BEACHES ALL LOOK THE SAME AT NIGHT WHETHER IT'S KANAGAWA OR CHIBA,
BUT I FEEL REALLY RELAXED WHEN I'M HERE.
UNIVERSIDAD
AMOR Y PAZ




SEE?

WOAH~ SO COLD!
BUT IT FEELS SO GOOD~
TAKE THIS!
HEY... DON'T HURT YOUR-SELF, OKAY?
I-ISN'T THIS...
I KNOW, I KNOW~ ♪

A CHANCE FOR ME TO CONFESS?!


AND TODAY'S THE DAY BEFORE YOUR MATCH!
Reason

NO, NO, NO. YOU SHOULD FOLLOW A DETAILED PLAN FOR SOMETHING IMPORTANT LIKE THIS.
Reason

Instinct
YEAH! DO IT NOW! GO WITH THE FLOW! GO GO GO!!

THEN, CONSIDER THIS. CAN YOU REALLY SAY YOU WON'T REGRET TODAY'S CONFESSION IF YOU LOSE IN KANTO AND ONLY NACCHAN MANAGES TO BECOME A PRO?
Rea

NO, NO! REMEMBER, NACCHAN BROUGHT YOU HERE TO HELP YOU RELAX!
IT'S NOT A MATTER OF WHEN'S GOOD, AND WHEN'S BAD!
Instinct
Rea

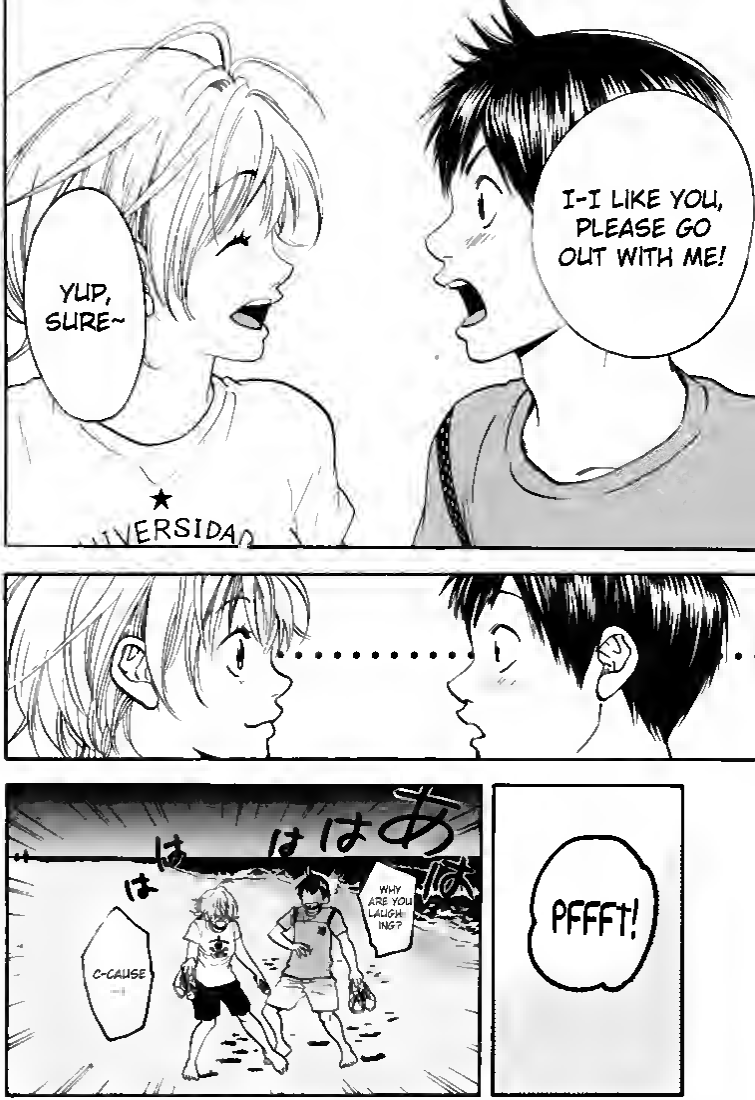
HEY... NACCHAN.
.....
AH... NOTHING...
WHAT'S WRONG? YOU LOOK SO SERIOUS.
EH?! WHAT?
WHAT'S WITH THAT ALL OF A SUDDEN?
THANKS FOR EVERYTHING.
WHEN I LOST, WHEN I WAS IN FLORIDA,
AND EVEN NOW, TOO.
IT'S NOT SUDDEN. I WAS JUST THINKING HOW YOU ALWAYS HELP ME OUT.

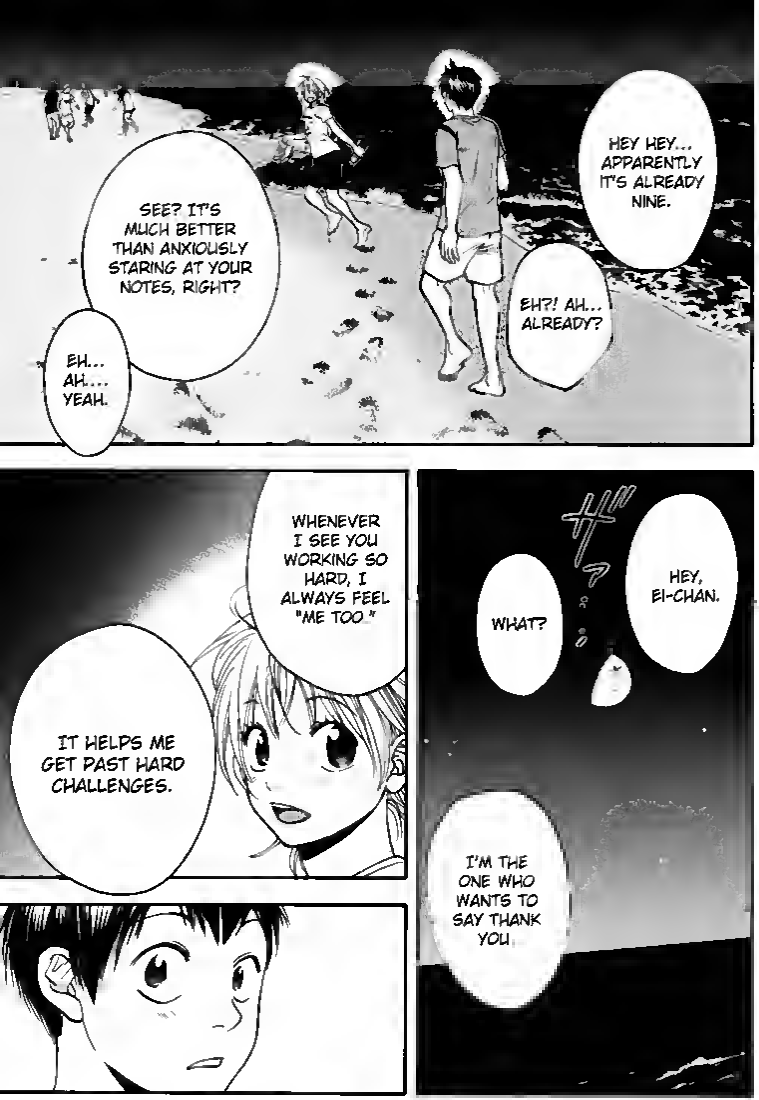
I WANT TO RETURN THE FAVOR, TOO.
GEEZ, YOU'RE EMBAR-RASSING ME~
AH, THAT'D BE GREAT.
I'LL BE YOUR PRACTICE PARTNER ANYTIME!
SO TELL ME ANYTHING YOU NEED.
THEN ..
GO OUT WITH ME.

WHAT?
HUH?
OH, IF IT'S SOMETHING LIKE THAT, I'LL....
EHHHH?! G-GO OUT? WAIT... UMM... YOU MEAN...
EH? EHH? W-WHY... WHAT DID... YOU'RE JOKING!
IT'S NOT A JOKE~

YUP.
THEN... YOU REALLY ...
HUH?
YOU... SAID IT FIRST.
Ah~
NO BOTHER~ IT DOESN'T M TTER WHO SAYS IT.
B-BUT... I'VE BEEN THINKING ABOUT IT FOR A LONG TIME, TOO!
NO .. IT'S JUST, I MADE A PROMISE WITH MYSELF TO SAY IT FIRST FOR A LONG TIME
78

CAUSE EI-CHAN WAS TRYING TO CONFESS LAST TIME, RIGHT? ALTHOUGH IT WAS ONLY UP TO "L-".
THEN WHY'RE YOU OKAY NOW?
L-
T-THAT'S TRUE, BUT I ONLY SAID IT UP TO "L-"
THAT WAS BE-CAUSE YOU WERE ASKING FOR MY FEELINGS ONLY WITHOUT SHAR-ING YOURS.
AND YOU SAID "IT'S NOT FAIR" BEFORE, SO I DECIDED...
I WANT TO SAY IT CLEARLY!
C'MON~ WHO CARES ABOUT WORDS AS LONG AS THEY GET THE MES-SAGE ACROSS?
THAT WAS ENOUGH FOR ME
79
EH?
AH...
THEN... WHY DON'T YOU SAY IT ONE MORE TIME?


I-I LIKE YOU, PLEASE GO OUT WITH ME!
YUP, SURE~
★
IVERSIDA
.....
はは
はは
あは
WHY ARE YOU LAUGHING?
C-CAUSE
PFFFt!


HEY HEY... APPARENTLY IT'S ALREADY NINE.
EH?! AH... ALREADY?
SEE? IT'S MUCH BETTER THAN ANXIOUSLY STARING AT YOUR NOTES, RIGHT?
EH... AH.... YEAH.
WHENEVER I SEE YOU WORKING SO HARD, I ALWAYS FEEL "ME TOO."
IT HELPS ME GET PAST HARD CHALLENGES.
HEY, EI-CHAN.
WHAT?
I'M THE ONE WHO WANTS TO SAY THANK YOU.

WOW... I FEEL LIKE I'M GONNA CRY.
AND THAT ALWAYS HELPS ME CHEER UP.
THAT'S WHY SEEING EI-CHAN WIN MAKES ME HAPPY, CAUSE IT FEELS LIKE IT'S MINE.
SIDAD
PAZ

THEN, SEE YA TOMOR-ROW!

AH, ANIKI, WELCOME BACK. WHAT TOOK YOU SO LONG?
OH, I WAS TAKING A WALK AT THE BEACH.
BEACH? WHY DON'T WE TRY SOME FIRE-WORKS IF WE WIN TOMOR-ROW?
LET'S DO OUR BEST!
YEAH.
ポー
Campus
Campus
FOR SOMETHING LIKE THIS TO HAPPEN THE DAY BEFORE THE MATCH...
LIFE IS SO UNPREDICT-ABLE...

ALRIGHT... I'LL DO MY BEST TOMORROW.
12 HOURS LEFT TILL START OF KANTO JUNIOR, 1ST ROUND.

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Baby Steps

ベイビーステップ

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連載開始3周年記念!! 大人気!! センターカラー!!

最新KC 第14巻は 10月15日(金) 発売です!!

Baby Steps
ベイビーステップ

#136 EXPECTATIONS ON FIRST MATCH

勝木 光
Katsuki Hikaru

Baby Steps

ふぁ～
6:30:
Wake up
6:00.
Breakfast
Ah-
Kanto Junior Tennis Competition, Day 1
Ah... morn-ing~
Blush...
Morning~ Ei-chan.
Some-thing's goin' on
もく
もく

OF COURSE. ALL THE REPRESENTATIVES OF SEVEN PREFECTURES AND ONE METROPOLIS FROM EACH AGE GROUP ARE ALL GATHERED HERE.
BUT THIS'LL BE REDUCED TO HALF IN JUST ONE DAY.
WE'LL ALL MAKE IT THROUGH, GOT IT!?
YES!
ザワ
ザワ
ザワ
KANTO JUNIOR TENNIS TOURNAMENT
WOW.... SO MANY PEOPLE.

AND YOUNGER MALE, NO. 30 MARUO EIICHIRO.
FINISH REGISTERING BEFORE 2:30.

7:30: POST WARM-UP JOG.

GET TO THE COURT AT LEAST 10 MINUTES BEFOKE THE MATCH.
NOTEBOOKS, DRINKS, TOWEL, ETC.
PACK ALL THE NECES-SARY EQUIP-MENT AND

MY FIRST OPPONENT, YAKABE TADA-NORI TOKYO JUNIOR'S BEST 8, 36TH IN KANTO
A BASELINER WHO USES HIS SERVE AND FOREHAND FLAT SHOT AS HIS MAIN WEAPON

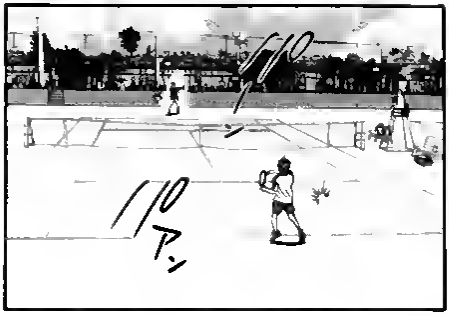
prince

SO FAR IT'S BEEN ALL ACCORDING TO PLAN
IF THERE WAS AN EXCEPTION
FIRST, SINCE HIS BACKHAND SLICE IS THE EASIEST TO READ,
I'LL START ATTACKING FROM THERE
THEN...
GO OUT WITH ME
HELLO.
BUT MIKE SAID LOVE MODE AND BATTLE MODE ARE EXACT OPPOSITES. SO I'VE GOT TO SWITCH BACK!
IF I CONSIDER IT AS RELIEVING ONE OF MY STRESSES IT'S A PLUS FACTOR!
IT'S JUST THAT IT HAPPENED A BIT SOONER. IT WASN'T COMPLETELY UNEXPECTED!
NO I WAS PLANNING TO CONFESS EVENTUALLY ANYWAY

H-HI.. ME TOO.
HUH?
YAKABE-KUN... HE'S A LOT TALLER THAN WHAT I'VE SEEN ON THE VIDEO..

LET'S HAVE A GOOD MATCH.

DOES THAT MEAN HE GREW A LOT IN JUST THIS PAST YEAR?

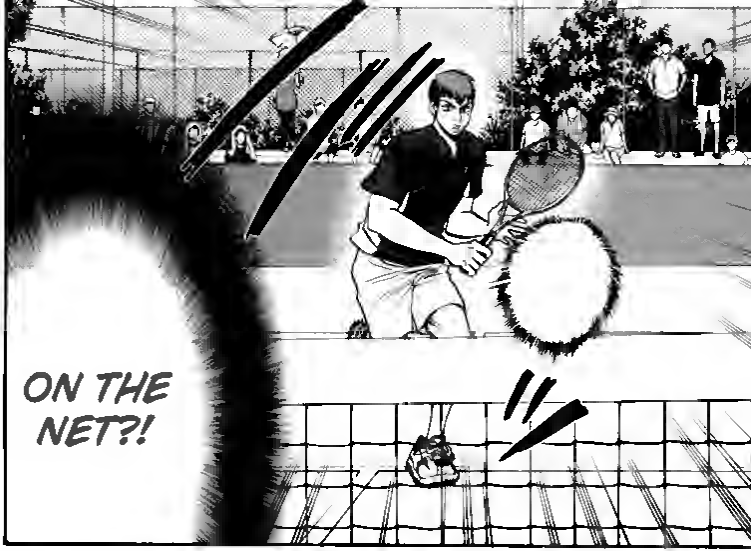


THREE MINUTES PRACTICE TIME.

HUH..? HE'S HITTING TOP-SPIN WITH HIS BACKHAND QUITE OFTEN TOO...
MOST IMPORTANTLY, THE TRAJECTORY OF THE BALL IS COMPLETELY DIFFERENT THAN WHAT I EXPECTED CAUSE HIS BODY SIZE IS DIFFERENT.
EVEN HIS SERVES, PREDOMINANTLY FLAT SHOTS, BUT THERE'S A FAIR AMOUNT OF VARIETY.

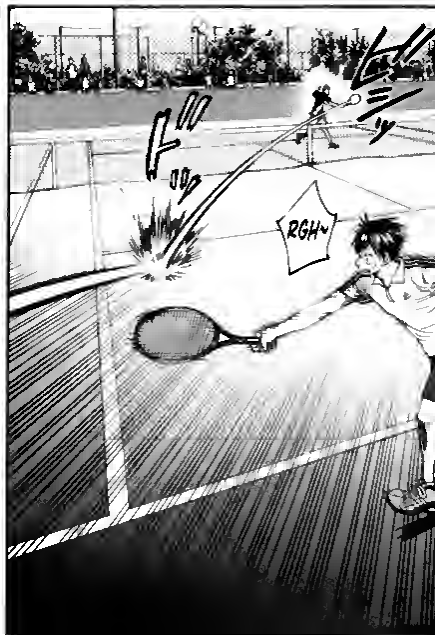
NOW WE'LL COMMENCE THE 1ST ROUND OF KANTO JUNIOR TENNIS TOURNAMENT.
3 SET MATCH, YAKABE SERVICE PLAY.
PLEASE HAVE A GOOD MATCH!
LET'S HAVE A GOOD MATCH!

MAKE USE OF THE DATA I CAN, AND JUST PLAY HOW I PLAY.
THERE'S NO REASON TO BE ANXIOUS FROM THE START JUST BECAUSE THINGS AREN'T AS EXPECTED.
FAST!!
IT'S NOT JUST HIS HEIGHT, HE'S GOT POWER, TOO.


ON THE NET?!

15 - LOVE.
YES. ONE DOWN!!

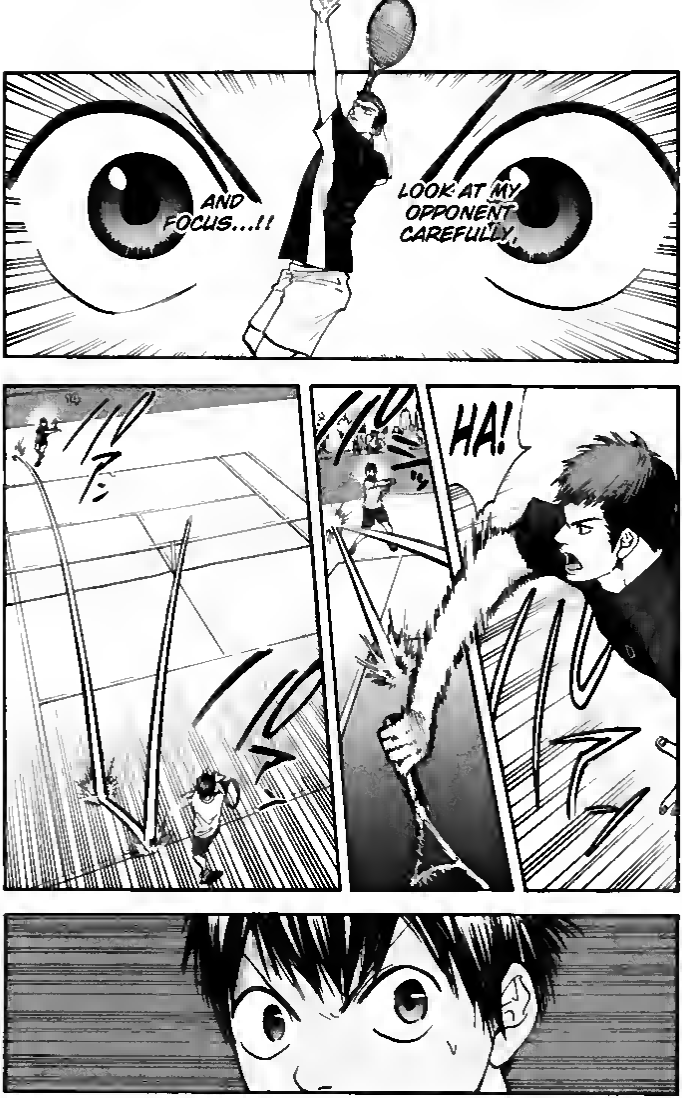
SERVE & VOLLEY?!


RGH

MAYBE I SHOULD START OFF WITH A CLEAN SHEET FIRST?
WAIT A SEC... THERE ARE WAY TOO MANY SURPRISES RIGHT NOW.
OR WAS THAT JUST A SURPRISE ATTACK?
HE NOT ONLY POWERED UP FROM GETTING TALLER, BUT HE'S NO LONGER A BASELINER?
HA!
AND FORWARD AGAIN!
HE DIDN'T HAVE A SPIN SERVE LIKE THIS, TOO...

AS I THOUGHT... YAKABE-KUN'S TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF HIS SUDDEN GROWTH IN HEIGHT TO SWITCH TO A SERVE & VOLLEY STYLE
ビュッ
30 - LOVE.
CRAP SIMPLY BEING DIFFERENT FROM MY EXPECTATIONS IS MAKING ME REACT SLOWER

FIRST, GET RID OF THE DATA FROM THE VIDEO AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE...
CALM DOWN .. THIS IS MY OPPONENT'S SERVE. IT'S NOT TIME TO GET ANXIOUS YET.
Phew~


AND FOCUS...!!
LOOK AT MY OPPONENT CAREFULLY...
HA!

SINCE HE ADDED A SPIN SERVE, THE FLAT SERVE FEELS A LOT STRONGER...
29 Yakabe Tadanori
1
30 Maruo Eiichiro
0
29 Yakabe Tadanori
2
30 Maruo Eiichiro
1
THAT'S CAUSE HE DOESN'T HAVE MUCH EXPERIENCE WITH THE TOP-SPIN YET.
MAYBE HE LACKS CONFIDENCE?
BUT... WHEN HE'S CORNERED, HE ONLY HITS A SLICE FOR HIS BACKHAND...

YES!! I MAINTAIN A HIGH ACCURACY ON MY SERVES,
AND DON'T LET HIM BREAK!!
Phew~
29 Yokabe Tadanori
30 Maruo Eiichiro
WHEN HE'S MOVING UP FOR A VOLLEY, HE TENDS TO RELY ON HIS FOREHAND FLAT SHOT
HA!
HIS VOLLEYS AREN'T BAD, BUT HIS STANCE IS TIGHT, AND FEELS UNCOMFORTABLE
BUT THAT FOREHAND ISN'T TOO DIFFERENT FROM WHAT I'VE SEEN ON VIDEO.
THIS IS ALSO PROOF THAT HE'S NOT USED TO IT

LOVE - 15.
YES!
IN THAT CASE,
IT'S NO MATCH FOR TAKUMA-SAN'S SERVE AND VOLLEY...
I CAN PASS HIM!!

BACKHAND SLICE AND FOREHAND VOLLEY... I'M STARTING TO NARROW DOWN MY TARGET...
ALL THAT'S LEFT IS HOW I'LL BREAK THOSE APART.
OKAY... FROM HERE ON,
I'LL GO ALL IN!!

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Baby Steps

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#137 CHANGE OF PACE

HA
HARD SHOT TO HIS BACKHAND!!
!!
WHEN HE'S CORNERED, HE'LL HIT A SLICE, SO...
TCH

LOVE - 30.
YES!!
HA
HA
I WON'T LET THAT HAPPEN!!
HE MIGHT WANT TO BREAK THIS, BUT...
HE SUDDENLY WENT ON THE OFFENSE THIS GAME

HERE IT COMES... SERVE & VOLLEY!!
HE'S ORIGINALLY A BASELINER, SO HE'S NOT USED TO PLAYING AT THE NET.
HIS ARMS ARE OPEN BECAUSE HE'S PUTTING TOO MUCH STRENGTH IN HIS SHOULDERS.
WITH THAT FORM..
YOU CAN'T RETURN IF I AIM FOR YOUR BODY!

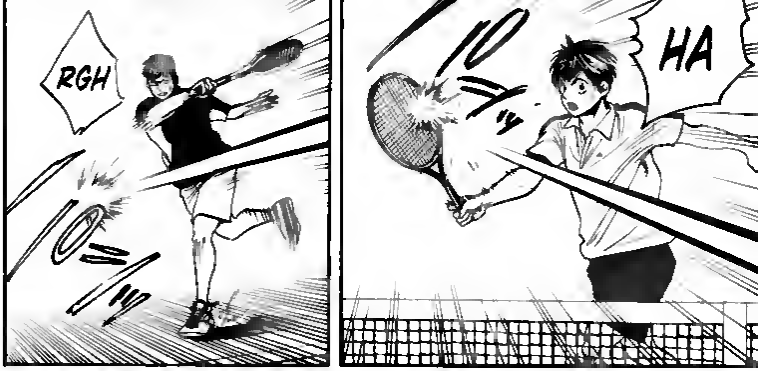
OKAY, WITH HIS...
RGH
I CAN HIT TO EITHER SIDE, SO...
WHICH SIDE?!

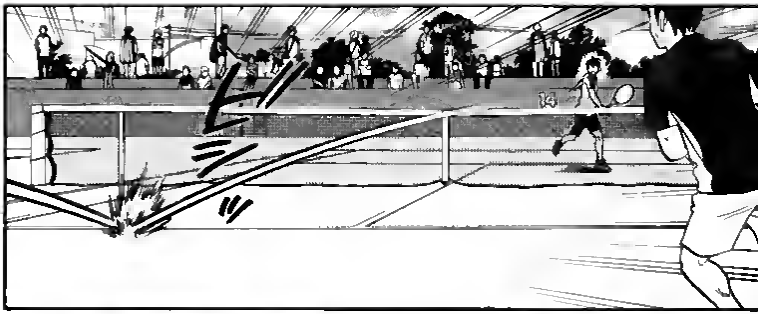
UP....!!
140キロ
おおっ
LOVE - 40.
NICE!!
ドン

RGH
NICE BREAK, MARUO!!
YES!
GAME, MARUO. COUNT 4 - 3.
YAKABE-SAN, BREAK BACK!!
I HAD A CLEAR CHOICE OF ATTACKS EVEN WHEN IT'S THE OPPONENT'S SERVE

I'M PRETTY MUCH DONE REWRITING THE DATA THANKS TO THE PAST SEVEN GAMES.
DUE TO THIS SUDDEN CHANGE, THERE ARE A COUPLE OF WEAKNESSES THAT HE COULDN'T COVER.
I WAS NERVOUS BECAUSE HE SWITCHED TO A TOTALLY DIFFERENT STYLE AND BODY IN JUST ONE YEAR, BUT
カキカキ
カキカキ
カキ
NOW RETURN THIS ACCORDING MY ORIGINAL PLAN
I WON'T LOSE IF IT'S A FOREHAND BATTLE!

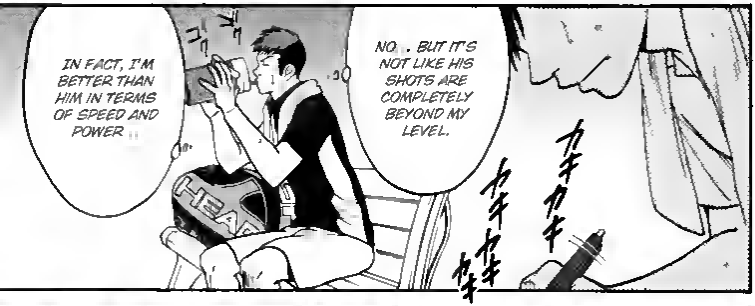
DEEP, HIGH-LOOPING SHOT.
PACE CHANGE!
IF MY OPPONENT MOVES BACK, IT MEANS HE'S FOLLOWING THE PACE...
IF SO...
H-HE'S IN FRONT?!


RGH
HA



FIRST SET WON BY MARUO. COUNT 6 - 3.

SHIT... WHEN I THINK HE'S GONNA HIT TO THE SIDE, HE HITS A LOB,
AND WHEN I THINK IT'LL BE A RALLY BATTLE, HE MOVES TO THE NET.
AND HIS SHOTS ARE SOMETIMES SHALLOW, SOMETIMES DEEP, FAST, THEN SLOW... I DON'T GET IT AT ALL...


NO... BUT IT'S NOT LIKE HIS SHOTS ARE COMPLETELY BEYOND MY LEVEL.
IN FACT, I'M BETTER THAN HIM IN TERMS OF SPEED AND POWER!!
カキカキ
カキカキ
カキ

14
IF I FORCE IT TO A POWER BATTLE, I CAN EASILY TAKE THE 2ND SET!

15 - LOVE.

HA
FASTEST SERVE AT THIS STAGE MEANS....
?
YOU HAVE THAT SORT OF SHOT TOO!
GAME, MARUO 2 - 0.
HE'S GOT SPEED TOO!
WHAT THE HECK IS HE!..?

HA
THAT MEANS... HE CAN HIT AT ANY SPEED
WITH ANY SPIN,
IN ANY DIRECTION,
ANYTIME HE WANTS?
GAME, MARUO 3 - 0.
AND THAT HE'S PLANNING HIS ATTACKS WITH ALL THAT PUT INTO CONSIDERATION?
DON'T TELL ME HE ALREADY KNOWS THAT MY WEAKNESSES ARE THE BACKHAND AND VOLLEY
AND THAT MY STRENGTH IS MY FOREHAND,

NO WAY...
THERE'S NO WAY THAT'S TRUE...
TO SCORE AGAINST ME?
IF THAT'S TRUE... DOESN'T THAT MEAN HE ALREADY HAS A TON OF METHODS...
BUT...

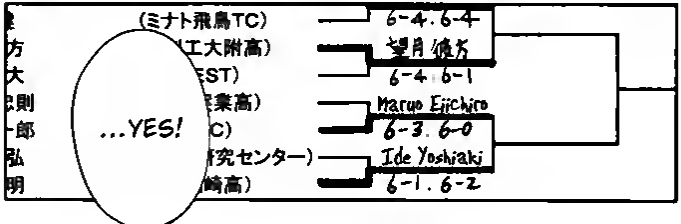
GAME, SET AND MATCH, WON BY MARUO.
COUNT: 6 - 3, 6 - 0!!
adidas

HE'S SUPPOSED TO BE A NON-SEEDER LIKE ME...
YES!!
.....
THIS GUY'S.... REALLY STRONG!
YES...! FIRST OFF, 1ST ROUND DOWN!!

LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE IN GOOD CONDITION.
YES. I DON'T FEEL THAT TIRED EITHER.
THAT'S GOOD THEN THIS IS IT.

AH... AOI-SAN.
YO, GOOD WORK.

TOMORROW'S IDE YOSHIAKI WILL BE QUITE AN OPPONENT ...


(ミナト飛鳥TC)
6-4. 6-4
(工大附高)
望月 徹方
6-4. 6-1
EST)
業高)
Maruo Eiichiro
6-3. 6-0
C)
研究センター)
Ide Yoshiaki
6-1. 6-2
崎高)
...YES!

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RAWs: Share
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#138 MAN WHO BRINGS A STORM

AH, EI-CHAN
STC
CONGRATULATIONS ON PASSING THE 1ST ROUND!

SHE'S EVEN BETTER THAN USUAL.
ISN'T TAKASAKI-SAN INCREDIBLE TODAY?

GEEZ, EVERYTHING'S GOING SUPER GREAT!

"EVERYTHING"... AM I INCLUDED IN THAT, TOO?
It'll be nice if that is the case.

たじっ
Wow, so bright~
STC

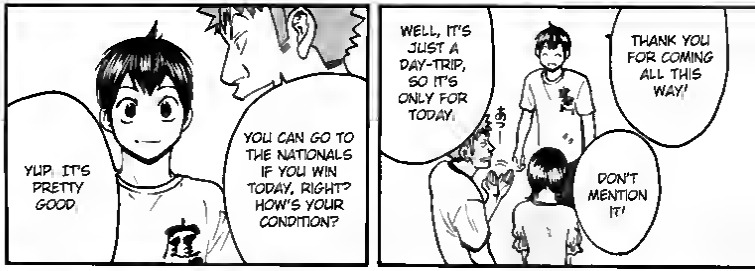
WE'RE ALL DONE!
ANIKI! I WON, TOO!
IT'S INCREDIBLE HOW SHE CAN MAKE ALL THE GOOD THINGS HAVE A POSITIVE EFFECT ON HER GAME...
よーしっ
STC
YES! ALL THE STC MEMBERS PASSED THE FIRST ROUND!
LIKE THAT, THE PLAYERS FOR THE 2ND ROUND WHO WOULD FIGHT FOR THE TICKET TO THE ALL-JAPAN JUNIOR HAVE BEEN DECIDED.

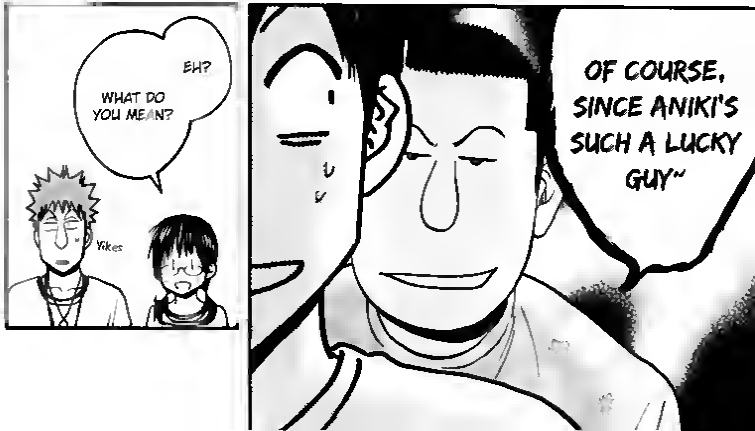
Ide Yoshiaki vs
Matsuda Takahiro.
6 – 1 6 – 2
Nabae Yu vs
Yamashita Shinobu.
6 – 1 6 – 1
Araya Hiroshi vs
Baba Tetsuro.
6 – 2 6 – 0
Okada Takayuki vs
Shima Kousuke.
6 – 0 6 – 1
Mogami Norihiko vs
Abe Makoto.
6 – 3 6 – 1.

THE FIRST DAY OF THE COMPETITION CAME TO A CLOSE WITH ALL THE SEEDED PLAYERS ADVANCING FORWARD WITHOUT ANY UPSETS.

YUP SINCE YESTERDAY.
WHAT?!
YOU TWO STARTED GOING OUT?!
EH...? UH... YES....
YESTERDAY AHHH, YOU MEAN THAT TIME!!
WAIT SO YOU GUYS WEREN'T GOING OUT TILL NOW?
ABOUT TIME~
WOW. REALLY? CONGRATS~
B-BUT... IT'S RIGHT BEFORE THE 1ST ROUND!!
THAT'S ...
C'MON, THEY'RE BOTH DOING WELL ANYWAY.
Don't be so mad, Yukichi
KANTO JUNIOR TENNIS COMPETITION, DAY TWO

H~EY, EI-CHAN! WE'RE HERE TO CHEER FOR YOU!
AH, KAGEYAMA! SASAKI-SAN!
庭球

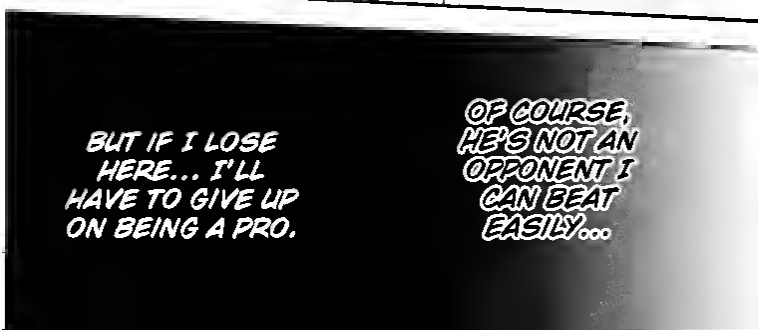

YUP. IT'S PRETTY GOOD.
YOU CAN GO TO THE NATIONALS IF YOU WIN TODAY, RIGHT? HOW'S YOUR CONDITION?
庭
WELL, IT'S JUST A DAY-TRIP, SO IT'S ONLY FOR TODAY.
THANK YOU FOR COMING ALL THIS WAY!
DON'T MENTION IT!


EH?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
Yikes
OF COURSE, SINCE ANIKI'S SUCH A LUCKY GUY~

Ah
NO, ACTUALLY... NAG-CHAN AND I DECIDED TO GO OUT...
WAIT, YUKICHI-KUN
I WAS PLANNING TO TELL YOU ONCE THE MATCH WAS OVER...
...
WELL, TENNIS IS MY ONLY LOVER, SO I'M TOTALLY FINE WITH IT...
SORRY, EI-CHAN. I CAN'T BE CELEBRATING HERE...
ズーン
S-SORRY. WE'RE IN THE MIDDLE OF OUR WARM UP, SO... LATER, OKAY?

タッ
タッ
タッ

IDE YOSHIAKI-KUN...
" ALL-JAPAN JUNIOR INDOOR SELECTIONALS TOP 8
ALTHOUGH HE HAS HIS UPS AND DOWNS, HE'S A PLAYER AS ACCOMPLISHED AS ARAYA-KUN.
AN OPPONENT THAT MADE NABAE-KUN SAY "I'D LIKE TO AVOID A CLOSE MATCH."


OF COURSE, HE'S NOT AN OPPONENT I CAN BEAT EASILY...
BUT IF I LOSE HERE... I'LL HAVE TO GIVE UP ON BEING A PRO.

...I'VE GOT MY RESOLVE ...!!
OKAY... 5 MINUTES BEFORE THE MATCH!
LET'S GO!!
KAGEYAMA. WHAT'S WRONG? MY MATCH'S ABOUT TO START
HMM?
EI-CHAN EI-CHAN EI-CHAN!!

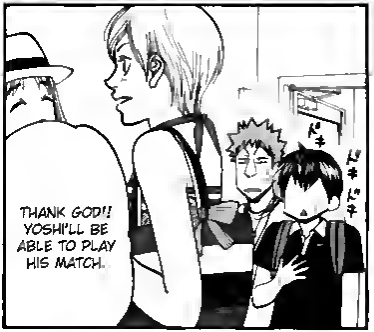
!?
ABOUT YOUR NEXT MATCH... THERE'S A BIG PROB-LEM!!
PLEASE!!
HE'LL BE BACK SOON!!
YOU SEE..
IS SOME-THING WRONG?
WHAT A CROWD

YOUR OPPONENT, IDE, STILL ISN'T HERE.
APPARENTLY THERE WAS A CAR ACCIDENT IN FRONT OF HIM DURING HIS WARM UP...
WHAT?!
NO WAY.. I-IS HE OKAY?
NAH, THE PERSON IN QUESTION ISN'T INJURED AT ALL.
BUT APPARENTLY HE WENT TO THE HOSPITAL WITH THE KID,
AND HE'S TALKING WITH THE POLICE ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED. I DON'T KNOW THE DETAILS, BUT
IT SEEMS THAT HE WON'T BE ABLE TO MAKE IT TO THE MATCH ON TIME..
THAT'S WHY HIS FRIENDS ARE ASKING THE REFEREES IF THEY COULD MOVE UP THE TIME.
HE JUST CAME OUT OF THE HOSPITAL, AND IS ON HIS WAY RIGHT NOW.
THE CHILD'S FINE WITH JUST MINOR FRACTURES.
THANK GOODNESS
HE TEXTED ME SAYING HE'LL GET HERE IN 20... NO, 30 MINUTES...

AH... MARUO-KUN!
...
SEEMS LIKE IDE-KUN WILL BE A BIT LATE.
WE WERE JUST ABOUT TO CALL YOU.
AH... I HEARD ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED.
WE TALKED TO BOTH THE HOSPITAL AND THE POLICE, AND APPARENTLY HE'S BEEN OF GREAT HELP.
SINCE IT'S A SPECIAL CIRCUM-STANCE, AS LONG AS YOU'RE FINE WITH IT, WE'RE PLANNING TO WAIT FOR IDE-KUN BEFORE STARTING THE MATCH. HOW ABOUT IT?
AH... OF COURSE.
I THINK IT'S BEST TO WAIT.

わぁ
THANK YOU SO MUCH!!

GEEZ, WHAT A FOOL HE COULD'VE BEEN DISQUALIFIED IF THINGS HAD GONE BAD
It's a relief that his opponent's a good person


THANK GOD!! YOSHI'LL BE ABLE TO PLAY HIS MATCH.
ドキ
ドキ

WELL, THAT'S THE KIND OF A GUY HE IS.
HE WAS SAYING "I'M FINE EVEN IF I GET DISQUALIFIED" OVER THE PHONE
EVEN THOUGH HE'S BEEN WORKING SO HARD SAYING "IT'S MY LAST NATIONALS"— HOW COULD HE ABANDON ALL THAT FOR SOME STRANGER?

Hang in there!! We'll get you to a hospital right away!!
Yikes, that's gonna hurt
Ahahaha
I CAN TOTALLY PICTURE THAT!
APPARENTLY HE SEEMED MORE HURT THAN THE INJURED KID.
IT'S NOT AN EASY THING TO DO.
OKOZE
HE'S QUITE SOMETHING TO PRIORITIZE A HURT STRANGER OVER AN IMPORTANT MATCH.
NO WONDER HE'S GOT SUCH GOOD FRIENDS
SOMETHING HAPPENS AND TURNS INTO A BIG ISSUE. IN THE END, HE ALWAYS ENDS UP AS THE HERO.
JESUS... WHY DO THINGS ALWAYS TURN OUT LIKE THIS FOR HIM?
AH, OKADA-KUN.

BUT... IT CERTAINLY FEELS LIKE I'M GETTING SUCKED INTO IDE-KUN'S STORY.
YEAH
IT'S BECOMING QUITE TROUBLESOME.
I'VE GOT TO... KEEP MY HEAD CLEAR.
ANYWAY, THIS IS STRANGE ...
S-SHUT UP
C'MON, YOU SAW IT COMING, RIGHT?

AREN'T THERE TOO MANY PEOPLE AT THIS COURT?
IN THAT CASE, THIS MATCH IS GOING TO BE HARD TO PREDICT.
IT MIGHT TURN OUT TO BE A VERY DIFFERENT MATCH FROM WHAT MARUO'S USED TO
IN TERMS OF SKILLS ALONE, I THINK MARUO'S ON THE SAME LEVEL AS IDE, BUT
I HEARD IDE'S STRONG UNDER PRESSURE, AND HE SHOULD BE QUITE USED TO LARGE CROWDS
HMMM, THIS DOESN'T FEEL GOOD.
ARE YOU SAYING THAT MOST OF THESE PEOPLE ARE HERE TO CHEER FOR THE OTHER GUY?
HE ALSO SEEMS TO HAVE A FAIR NUMBER OF FANS, TOO.
THERE MIGHT BE PEOPLE WHO CAME TO WATCH AFTER HEARING ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED TO IDE.

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IT'S BEEN 30 MINUTES
SINCE IDE-KUN'S TARDINESS WAS EXCUSED BY THE COMPETITION HEADQUARTERS.

#139: IDE YOSHIAKI

HEY... ISN'T THAT IDE?
WHERE, WHERE?

AH...

I...
I'M HERE.

I HEARD HE WAS WILLING TO FORFEIT THIS MATCH FOR THE SAKE OF A KID WHO GOT INTO AN ACCIDENT.
OH?! SO THAT'S IDE?
FOR REAL?! A 5TH SEED? THAT'S SO COOL!
HERE HE IS!!
YOU'RE FINALLY HERE!!
HE~Y, YOSHI! HERE, HERE.
THEY'RE ALL HERE TO ROOT FOR YOU AFTER HEARING WHAT HAPPENED!
EH?! FOR ME?
HEY~ EVERYONE, THANKS.
WAIT, WHY'RE THERE SO MANY PEOPLE?

BUT HE WAS CRYING, ASKING ME TO STAY TILL HIS PARENTS COME, AND POLICE WAS TAKING SO LONG, AND...
ANYWAY, THAT'S GREAT. YOU CAN GET TO YOUR MATCH NOW.
THANK GOODNESS!
HE HAD SOME MINOR FRACTURES, BUT IT SEEMS LIKE HE'LL BE FINE.
YUP.
THE KID'S FINE, RIGHT?

DEFINITELY WIN!

WELL, I'D HAVE FIGURED SOMETHING OUT IF THAT HAPPENED.
YEAH, EVEN THOUGH YOU WORKED SO HARD YOU WERE SO CLOSE TO GETTING DISQUALIFIED, YOU KNOW!?
STUPID!!

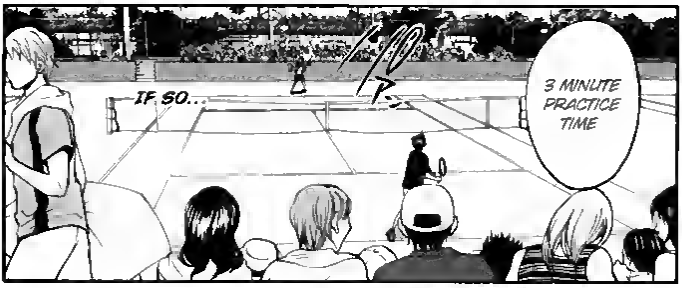
I TOLD YA, I'M SORRY...
C'MON! IT'S FINE, SO GO!

SURE!

HE'S HEEEEE EERE!!

わっ
IDE!! WE'RE HERE FOR YOU!!
THE ALL-JAPAN WITHOUT YOU IS TOO BORING!!
DO YOUR BEST FOR THE KID, TOO!!
IT'S ALL ABOUT WHETHER OR NOT HE CAN PLAY WITHOUT GETTING INFLUENCED BY THE ATMOSPHERE
IT'S INCREDIBLE...
WOW... ISN'T THIS A TOTAL AWAY GAME?
わぁぁぁ
I'LL GET READY IN A FLASH, SO WAIT FOR A SEC.
SORRY, MARUO-KUN. THANKS FOR WAITING FOR ME!
NO PROBLEM I'M GLAD THAT YOU MADE IT

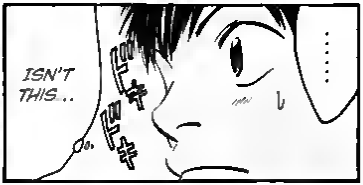
WOW... HE'S NOT NERVOUS AT ALL EVEN THOUGH HE'S GETTING SO MUCH ATTENTION...
I GUESS HE'S USED TO A LARGE CROWD.
NO. THESE CONDITIONS ACTUALLY HELP HIM BRING OUT HIS TRUE STRENGTH


3 MINUTE PRACTICE TIME
IF SO...

THIS SITUATION IS IN IDE-KUN'S FAVOR
THAT'S NOT ALL. THESE SHOTS SHOW THAT HIS TECHNIQUE IS ALSO ON THE NATIONAL LEVEL.

The best of 3 Tie-break sets, Souji like to serve, Play!
いいぞ！
行っけ！！
頑張って！！
頑張ってください！！

I'VE GOT TO WIN NO MATTER WHAT AGAINST SUCH AN OPPONENT IN THIS SITUATION..


ISN'T THIS..
……

A LOT LIKE A PRO-FESSIONAL MATCH?
TIME

I'LL NEVER FORGET THIS DEBT, OKAY?
DON'T BOTHER. I HEARD WHAT HAPPENED ANYWAY.
REALLY? IT WAS ACTUALLY QUITE A HASSLE, YOU KNOW?
BUT THANKS TO EVERYONE, IT ALL WORKED OUT,
AND I'M SURE THAT GETTING TO PLAY LIKE THIS IS SOME SORT OF FATE
LET'S HAVE THE BEST MATCH OF OUR LIVES!!

YEAH!
15
AND NOW, WE'LL START THE 2ND ROUND OF THE KANTO JUNIOR TENNIS COMPE-TITION.
THREE SET MATCH, IDE'S SERVE!

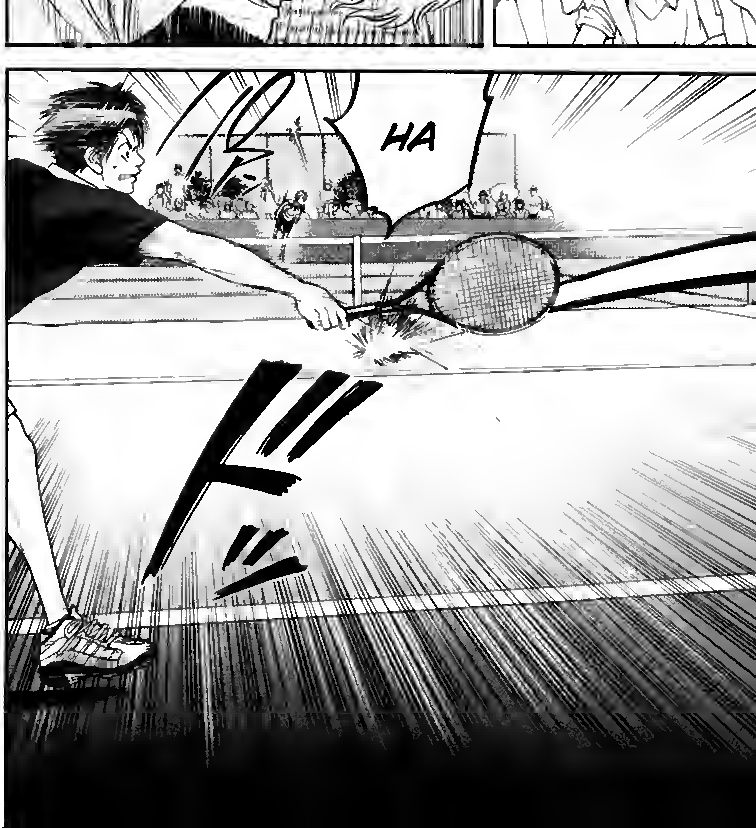
"LET'S PLAY THE BEST MATCH OF OUR LIVES" HUH...
THAT'S RIGHT.
SO I WON'T HAVE ANY REGRETS...
BECAUSE THIS MIGHT END UP BEING THE LAST BATTLE IN WHICH I CAN GIVE IT MY ALL...
BUT I WON'T LOSE JUST CAUSE IT'S IDE-KUN.
I WANT TO WIN THIS KIND OF MATCH!!

YOSHI~ FIRST POINT!
HA

14
HA
キュッ
パシ
パシ
パシ

YES! EI-CHAN, NICE RETURN!
0 - 15.
OOPS..
HEY GUYS, WHY DON'T WE SPEAK UP A BIT?
Sniff
LOOKS LIKE HE'S NOT FEELING TOO PRESSURED
STARE
AH...
TAKE HIM DOWN AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE, AND DON'T LET HIM CREATE A HEATED ATMOSPHERE!!
I'VE GOT TO TAKE THE FIRST LEAD AGAINST IDE-KUN!

IDE, TAKE THE NEXT ONE!


HA

15 - 15.
FAST, EVEN THOUGH IT WAS A TOP-SPIN!!
YIKES
IDE, TAKE ANOTHER ONE!!
YES, NICE SERVE!!
WOAH.. WAIT, WHAT THE HECK IS THIS...?
WOW.. WHAT A CHEER...

OKAY, IDE, TAKE THE LEAD!!
LET'S KEEP THIS UP!!

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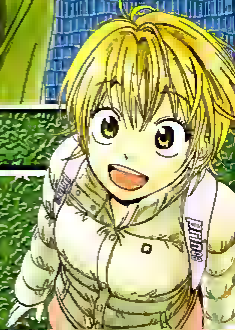
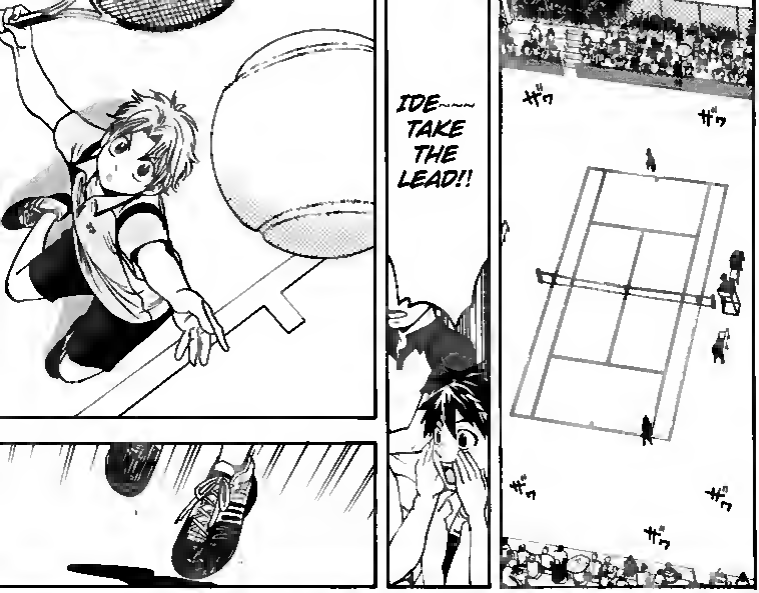



IDE~~~
TAKE
THE
LEAD!!

HA
#140: TRUE INTENTION

HA
A SLICE CONSISTENT WITH THE DATA.
BE THE FIRST TO ATTACK WITH A POWER SHOT!!
YES...!
IT'S DEEP IN.

DAH
HE'S MOVING TO THE NET?!
A HIGH-RISK DOWN THE LINE ALL OF A SUDDEN?!
BUT THE BALL'S NOT TOO HEAVY, AS EXPECTED.
!?

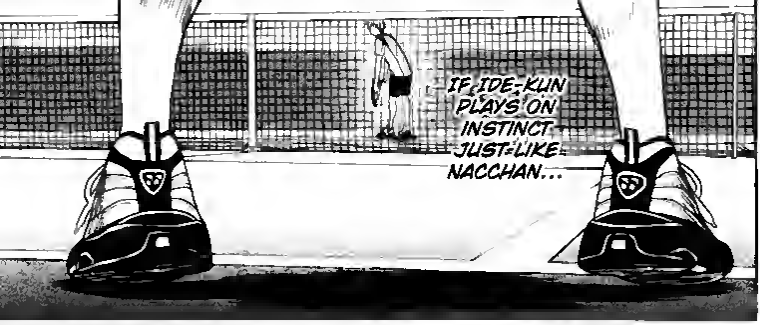
CRAP... I WASN'T EXPECTING THAT!!
CAN I MAKE IT?!

15 - 30
Phew
RGH
G-GOOD WORK, EI-CHAN
HE WAS ONLY A FEW INCHES AWAY!
あーあ
SO CLOSE!
だっ
AND FORCING HIMSELF UP WITH THAT LEVEL OF A SHOT WAS RECKLESS, TOO
IT WAS RISKY SINCE I FELT RUSHED
GOING FOR DOWN-THE-LINE FROM THAT UNBALANCED POSITION WAS TOO FORCEFUL ..
カリ
カリ

14
BUT WAS THAT A SURPRISE ATTACK? OR DOES HE HAVE SOME SORT OF A PLAN?
SECOND SERVE SHOULD BE WEAKER
HA

STRONG FLAT?!
SHOOT!! THAT WAS A BAD HIT.
AH
H-HE'S MOVING UP AGAIN?!

DON'T WORRY, IDE!
THAT SERVE WAS GOOD!!
ウッ
トン
トン
15 - 40
IN AN IMPORTANT FIRST SERVICE GAME... WHAT IS HE THINKING?
EVEN THOUGH IT WAS A SECOND SERVE, A FLAT... AND GOING FOR SERVE & VOLLEY, TOO?!
He's supposed to be an all-rounder
IT LOOKS LIKE SHE'S PLAYING BASED ON A MOMENTARY WHIM...
BUT HER WHIMS ACTUALLY FORM A CONCRETE MEANING AS THE MATCH GOES ON.
THIS FEELING OF THE UNKNOWN...
IT'S JUST LIKE WHEN I PLAYED NACCHAN.


IF IDE-KUN PLAYS ON INSTINCT JUST LIKE NACCHAN...

RATHER THAN BEING TIED TOO MUCH ON DATA OR COMMON SENSE,
IT'D BE BETTER TO FOCUS ON THE IMPRESSIONS I GET FROM WATCHING HIM.
ALTHOUGH IT'S MY BREAKPOINT, LET'S NOT TAKE TOO GREAT OF A RISK, AND
TRY TO FIGURE OUT WHAT IDE-KUN'S GOING FOR TODAY.

HERE, COME AT ME...

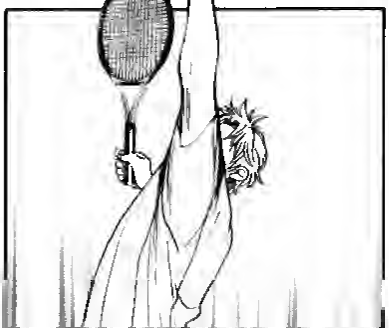
HA
RGH
30 - 40
LET'S GO FOR ONE MORE, IDE!!
HERE IT IS!! IDE, NICE SERVE!!

10
IDE-KUN'S POINTS SO FAR HAVE BEEN TWO SERVICE ACES...
RECK-LESS NET PLAY, AND A FORCE-FUL SER-VICE DASH...
THEY ALL CAME FROM IDE-KUN'S SUPER AG-GRESSIVE ATTACKS.

ANOTHER SERVICE ACE?!

WAIT A SEC...?!

WITHOUT CONSIDER-ING THE RISKS FOR EVEN A SECOND...
DON'T TELL ME HE'S TRYING TO FINISH ALL THE BALLS IN ONE SHOT

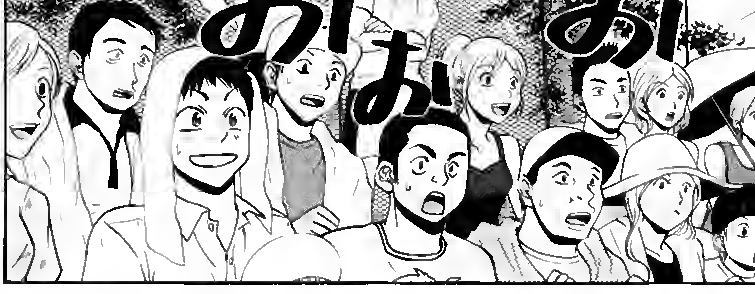


HE'S TRYING TO BE "AS AG-GRESSIVE AS POSSI-BLE".
IN THAT SENSE, IT COULD JUST BE THAT

HA
RGH

HAA

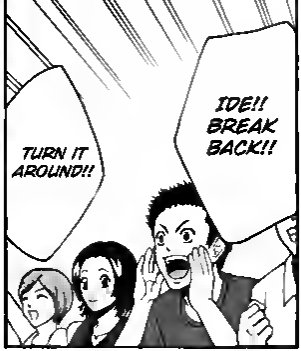
AGAIN
...


おぉ
おぉ

!
GAME, MARUO. COUNT 1 - 0.
OUT!
A-ALMOST, IDE!!
THE MATCH IS JUST GETTING STARTED!!
ガバッ
YES!! HE BROKE ALREADY!!
…
ガヤ
ガヤ
ガヤ
ガヤ
5

BUT... THERE'S NO WAY ALL THOSE FORCEFUL SHOTS WOULD GO IN.
I WAS SAVED BY HIS MISTAKES.
IT'S BIG THAT I MANAGED TO BREAK, BUT...
WELL... GUESS IT'S FINE.
DOES IT MEAN HE'S BEING MORE AGGRESSIVE THAN USUAL?
TIME.
90 MARUO EIICHIRO
32 IDE YOSHIAKI
0

JUST HAVING A LARGE CROWD IS ALREADY A BOTHER,
BUT IT'S PRETTY HARD TO PLAY WITH THEM CHEERING ONLY FOR MY OPPONENT


IDE!! BREAK BACK!!
TURN IT AROUND!!

I HONESTLY HAVE NO IDEA WHAT HE'S THINKING, BUT. .

STILL NO MATTER HOW MUCH STRENGTH HE'S GETTING FROM THOSE CHEERS,
IT DOESN'T MAKE IT OKAY TO LOSE YOUR FIRST SERVICE GAME

IF HE'S GOING TO ONLY BET ON ONE-HIT KILLS,
I'LL SAFELY KEEP MY GAME USING THE BEST METHOD AGAINST IT.

HERE I GO...!!

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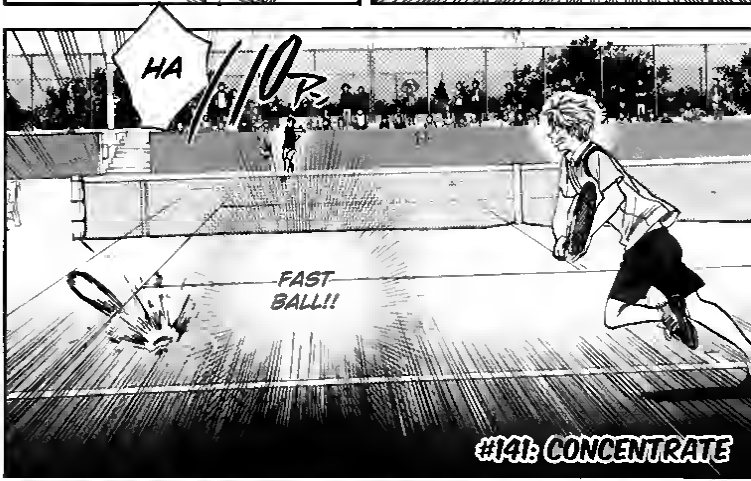
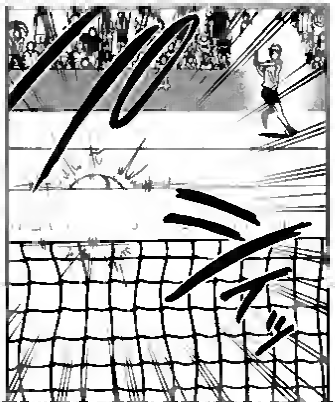
IF IDE-KUN'S GOING FOR A ONE-HIT KILL...!!!
KICK SERVE TO THE CENTER!!
HA
ばしゅん
Baby Steps
ベイビーステップ
!
IT'S HARD TO GO FOR A RETURN ACE WITH A CENTER
SINCE THERE'S AN ANGLE, IT'S MORE LIKELY TO BE AN
MARUO
Shorter distance, to more likely to be an ace
Serve to the Cross
Serve to the Center
Long distance and hard to create an angle so less likely to be an ace
IDE
SINCE TOP SPINS ARE SLOW BUT MORE POWERFUL, THEY'RE HARDER TO RETURN WITH A FAST BALL

FINISH THE NEXT ONE WITH A...

IF HIS RETURN IS LACKLUSTER...


HA
FAST BALL!!
#141: CONCENTRATE



RGH

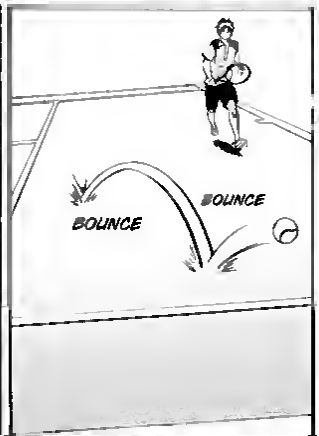
...
YES!
15 - 0
HEY... THAT MARUO GUY'S PRETTY GOOD.
IDE!! ONE BREAK!!
HA

30 - 0
SO FAST...
HE DIDN'T HAVE SUCH A SERVE LAST YEAR..
IS IT BECAUSE OF THE QUICK CHANGE FROM THE LAST SPIN SERVE?
IT FEELS LIKE EI-CHAN'S GOTTEN EVEN STRONGER!
Feels so stable
YEAH. IN TERMS OF SKILL, HE'S DEFINITELY AT A LEVEL WHERE HE CAN FIGHT ON THE NATIONAL STAGE.
BUT THAT IDE GUY IS A HIGH RANKED PLAYER EVEN IN THE NATIONALS.

ALTHOUGH HE DOESN'T FEEL THAT INTENSE COMPARED TO ARAI, ...
40 - 0.
HA
WIDE SLICE ON THIS ONE!!
TO PREVENT IDE-KUN'S EYES FROM GETTING USED TO IT, MAKE USE OF ALL 18 DIFFERENT SERVES..

HA
QUICK ATTACK!!
HOO
IF HE'S OFF BALANCE, DON'T LET HIM RECOVER AND...
HA
FOR-WARD?!

Tch


BOUNCE
BOUNCE

GAME MARUO. 2 - 0.
YES!
KEEP!!
30 MARUO EIICHIRO
2
32 IDE YOSHIAKI
0

BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN I EXPECT IT TO KEEP GOING LIKE THIS.
THERE'S NO NEED TO CHANGE ANY-THING AS LONG AS I'M ABLE TO SCORE.

I CAN KEEP ON GOING!!

IN ORDER TO BE ABLE TO DEAL WITH ANY-THING THAT HAPPENS, I'VE GOT TO KEEP ON MOVING THROUGH AS FAR AS I CAN.

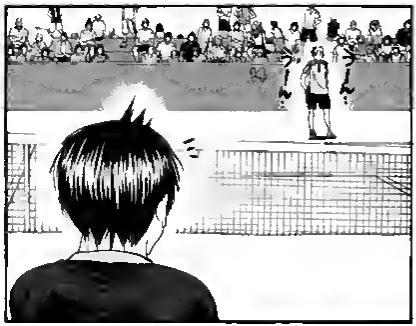
DON'T WORRY, IDE!
YOU CAN'T HELP IT ON A RETURN GAME.
CHANGE GEARS AND MOVE ON!
HA
WATCH OUT FOR A FLAT SERVE LIKE LAST TIME...

HERE IT IS!!
HA

0 - 15
SERI-OUS-LY?!
INCREDIBLE RETURN ACE!!

HE USED THAT FLAT ON THE SECOND SERVE LAST TIME.
SINCE MARUO MAKES SURE TO REMEMBER ALL THE POINTS, IT'S HARD FOR SAME ATTACKS TO WORK ON HIM.
THAT'S THE BORINGLY GOOD PART ABOUT HIM!
scratch
scratch

IT'S WAY TOO DIFFERENT FROM THE IMAGE I GOT WHEN HE PLAYED NABAE.
RETURNING THAT WITH AN ACE... THAT'S REAL BAD.



WHAT SHOULD I DO?

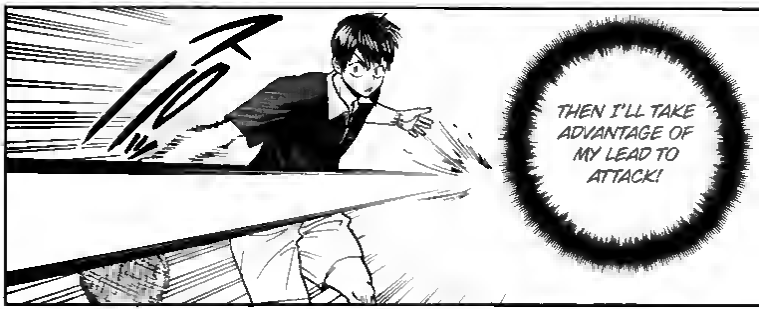
OH, OOPS...

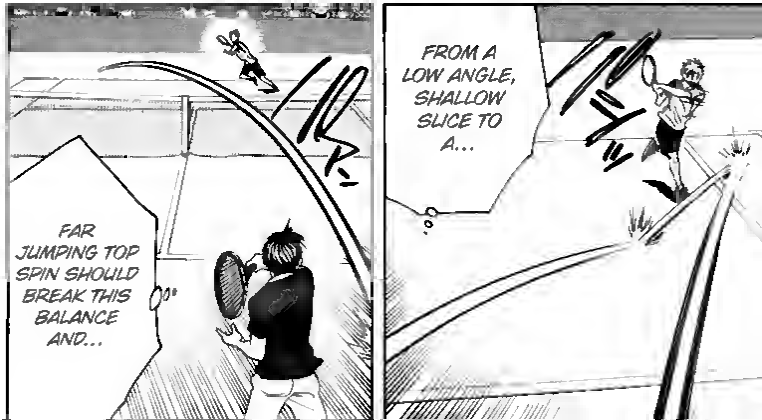
15 SEC-ONDS.

?

RYA
LET'S THINK WHILE I'M PLAYING...
I'LL GET THE HANG OF IT EVENTUALLY.
IF HE'S GOING FOR A ONE-HIT KILL NEXT...
FAST FIRST SERVE!!
DOWN THE LINE!!

HUH..? HE'S NOT FINISHING IT IN ONE BLOW?
CHANGE IN STYLE?!
!


THEN I'LL TAKE ADVANTAGE OF MY LEAD TO ATTACK!


FAR JUMPING TOP SPIN SHOULD BREAK THIS BALANCE AND...
FROM A LOW ANGLE, SHALLOW SLICE TO A...

HA
HUMPH
0 - 30
YES!
HE'S REALLY GOOD!
"SPAH" WITH A SLICE THAN "GYUUUN" WITH A TOP SPIN RIGHT AFTER.
I HAVE TO MATCH THEM WITH A DIFFERENT TIMING FOR BOTH?
mumble mumble

NO WORRIES! IDE'LL DEFINITELY FIGURE SOMETHING OUT.
....
WHO KNOWS... HE'S NOT SEEDED, RIGHT?
IS THE OPPONENT STRONG?
IS IDE-KUN OKAY?
HA
HA
NO MATTER HOW FAR I'M AHEAD, I CAN'T RELAX EVEN FOR A MOMENT

HA
IF I LOSE HERE, IT'S THE END!
GAME. MARUO 3 - 0.
YES!
MARUO EIICHIRO
IDE YOSHIAKI
2ND BREAK IN THIS SET!
Phew
GULP
GULP

HE STARTED WRITING STUFF IN HIS NOTE-BOOK.
HMM... INTEREST-ING.

WITH THIS, I MIGHT HAVE GOTTEN QUITE AN EDGE THIS FIRST SET...
schlabb scratch schlabb scratch schlabb
prince

MAYBE I SHOULD GO FOR TIGHTER SHOTS AND CHANGE UP THE PACE MORE...

EVER SINCE IDE-KUN START-ED GOING EASY ON HIS ONE-HIT KILL SHOTS, THE RALLIES HAVE BEEN LONGER.
AT THE SAME TIME, IT'S BEEN RARER FOR ME TO FINISH WITH AN ACE.

Stare-
mumble mumble

"GYULIN" IS A "TAT-TT-TA"...
IF I HIT A "SPAH", WITH A "TAT-TT-A", THEN...

mumble
mumble
IT WON'T WORK UNLESS IT'S A "TATA"
tap tap
NO...
"DON!" IS FINE WITH A "TATTA"
ガヤ
ガヤ
TIME!
!?

W-WHAT'S HE DOING?

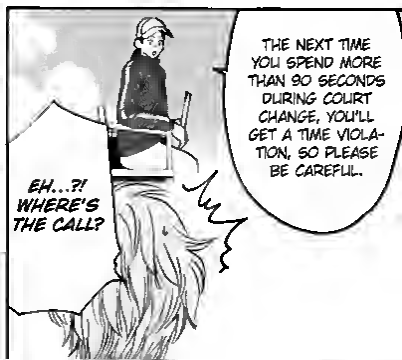
...BUT IF HE'S ON THE NET...
THEN IT'LL BE "TAT"...
Mumble mumble

IDE-KUN... YOU'RE GETTING A WARNING.

ﾌﾟｯ ﾌﾟｯ

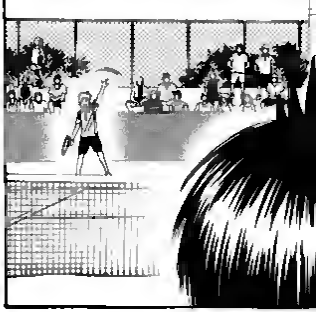
15 SEC-ONDS.

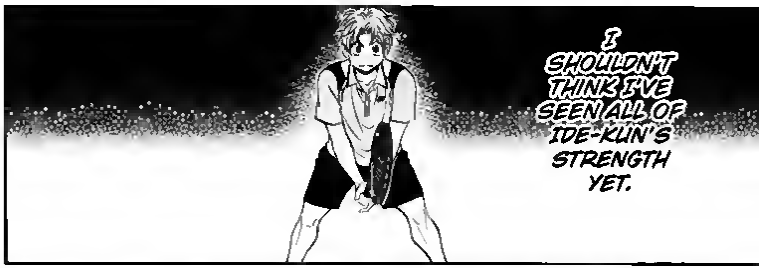
I DID IT ALREADY.
AH... SORRY, I WASN'T LISTENING!!


THE NEXT TIME YOU SPEND MORE THAN 90 SECONDS DURING COURT CHANGE, YOU'LL GET A TIME VIOLATION, SO PLEASE BE CAREFUL.
EH...?! WHERE'S THE CALL?

HEY, HEY. IS THAT IDE GUY REALLY OKAY?
AA
ISN'T YOSHI GETTING MORE AND MORE INTO THE GAME?
YUP.
HE STOPS LISTENING TO HIS SURROUNDINGS ONCE HE STARTS CONCENTRATING ON SOMETHING.
お！
IT WAS ALWAYS LIKE THAT AGAINST STRONG OPPONENTS, RIGHT?
SO THAT MEANS...
TODAY'S OPPONENT IS QUITE STRONG, EVEN THOUGH HE'S NOT SEEDED.

LOOKS LIKE I SHOULD AT LEAST BE CAUTIOUS.
I WONDER WHAT HE'S GONNA DO?




I SHOULDN'T THINK I'VE SEEN ALL OF IDE-KUN'S STRENGTH YET.

TO BE CONTINUED IN VOLUME 16

Author's Note

Hello everyone, this is Katsuki.

We're already at volume 15, and the serialization reached its 3rd year without any troubles. Thank you so much! Time moves so fast.

Since three years have passed, Ei-chan and the others have all undergone a couple of transformations.

But I'd like to believe I've grown a lot mentally.

Then see you next volume~

NATSU SIDE

Good evening, this is Kousaka Akiko.
STC member Best 4 in Prefecture
We are currently staying at a hotel, but...
My roommate who just came back from the beach apparently
is acting very weird.
Wow she's singing her original song
Happy~☆ Lucky~♡ Superfantastic~♪
Summer is my season~♫
I'm just glad I'm not up against her tomorrow.
Okay, let's do my best tomorrow~
Anyway

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Baby Steps

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